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Christian saints, as
described in the New



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CHRISTIAN SAINTS,

AS

DESCRIBED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

BEING

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

In St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin,

BEFORE THE

ADDITIONAL-CURATES'-FUND-SOCIETY.

BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

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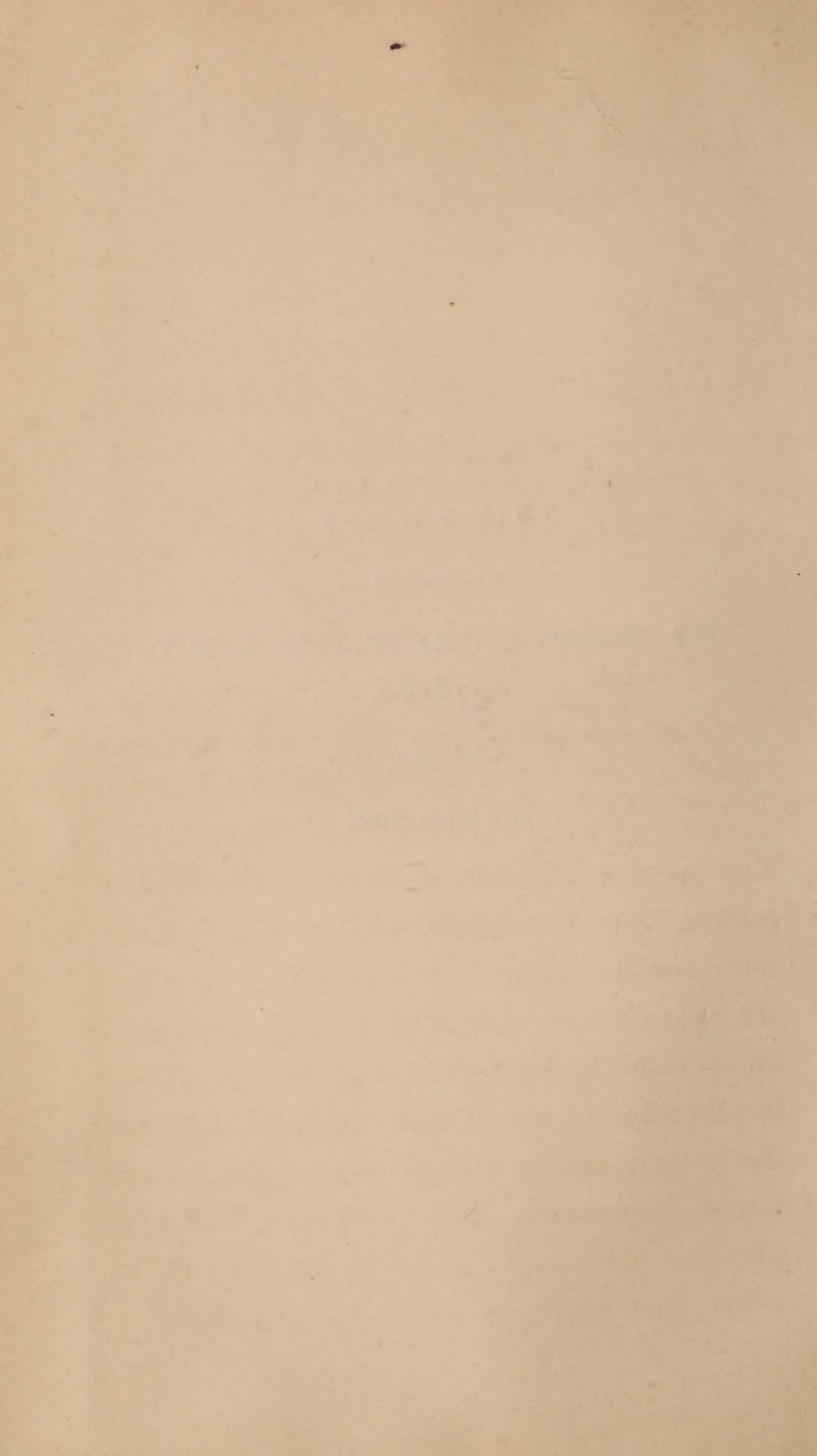
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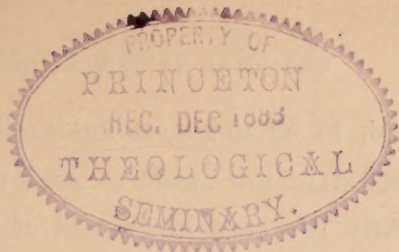
THE ADDITIONAL - CURATES' - FUND - SOCIETY

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CHRISTIAN SAINTS,

AS DESCRIBED IN

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

ROM. i., 1 & 7.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an Apostle to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called [to be] Saints.”

THE opening addresses of the Apostolic Epistles contain more instruction, and more matter for useful meditation, than some readers of Scripture are aware. And, especially, the *titles* applied to the persons each Apostle is writing to, tend, incidentally, to throw much valuable light on the history, and on the whole character, of the Gospel dispensation. They indicate to us what were the ideas most familiar to the mind of the writer, and which he expected, or at least in-

tended, to be the most habitually impressed on the mind of the reader. And this is more particularly the case in respect of any remarkable words or phrases that occur *frequently*, and are repeated in Epistles addressed to different and distant Churches. Appellations thus commonly employed, must, we may conclude, express something essential to the religion of the Gospel; and it is, therefore, most important to ascertain their true import, and full force.

Now in looking over the openings of the several Epistles of Paul, you will find that in the far greater part of them he applies the title of SAINTS to the persons he is addressing.

The Romans, and also the Corinthians, he addresses as “called saints(a):” he applies the title of saints to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to the Ephesians: besides which, he several times uses the same title at the close of an Epistle, in reference to those whose remembrances he gives: “all the saints salute you.”

With respect to his address to the Ephesians,

(a) The words “to be,” which were inserted by our translators, they have printed in italics, to denote that there is no corresponding word in the original.

“to the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus,” it is worth remarking that our translation might naturally lead the reader to suppose the Apostle to be addressing his Epistle to *two* distinct classes of persons:—“to the *saints* which are at Ephesus, and to the *faithful* in Christ Jesus.” But the original will not bear that sense. The exact rendering would be, “to the saints (*i. e.* the holy), even the believers in Christ Jesus, who are at Ephesus.” The word “faithful,” I may observe, by the way, was used in the times when our translators wrote, in a sense which it has now lost, to signify “a believer.” Thus, in one of the prayers at the close of the communion-service, we read of “the blessed company of all faithful people;” and again, in the 19th Article, a Church is defined, “a congregation of faithful men:” meaning, evidently, in both places, “believers in Christ.”

Who then were those Saints and Believers to whom the Apostle addresses his Epistles? Manifestly, not certain persons of distinguished holiness, beyond the rest of the Christians; for he takes occasion to rebuke several of those he

addresses, for their irregularities and grievous sins. It is plain that he uses the term as exactly equivalent to *Christians*:—as applying to all who had professed Christianity and been baptized into the Christian Church. And the same may be said of several other terms which are applied by him, and by the other sacred writers, to what we now call Christians. They are often addressed as the *Brethren*, the *Elect*, [or chosen] the *Called*, and the *Disciples*. But it is very remarkable that amidst all this variety of appellations, they are never once addressed by that of Christians, which has been, for so many ages, their constant designation. Thrice only does the word occur in the New Testament; and never, as applied by Christians to one another. We find it mentioned, in Acts xi., as the title for the first time bestowed on the Disciples at Antioch: evidently, by the Romans, as the name is of Latin formation. Again we find Agrippa saying to Paul, “almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” And lastly, we find the Apostle Peter adverting to it as the designation, among the unbelieving heathen rulers, of a *crime* for which the Believers suffered per-

secution. He exhorts them to take care that none of them suffer “as a murderer, a thief, or an evil-doer; but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.”

The title then, was, it appears, perfectly well known in the Apostolic age; and it was not held as a term of reproach among Christians; for they gloried in the name of Christ; but yet they never applied it, as we now do, to one another.

Now this fact, (however it is to be accounted for, or whether we can account for it at all or not), is one from which we may draw an important conclusion as to the *antiquity* of the books of the New Testament. Suppose these books had been, as some daring speculators have presumed to conjecture, not really composed in the apostolic age, by the persons whose name they bear, but compiled in the second, third, or fourth century, out of traditions afloat in the Church, and then fathered upon the Apostles and Evangelists, by fraud, carelessness, and ignorance:—suppose this had been the case, how certain it is that we should have found in these books the word Christians,

as commonly applied by Christians, to each other, as we know it was in those ages. For the word *is* thus employed by the writers of those ages, and of all subsequent times, whose works have come down to us, almost as commonly as in the present day. Any compiler, therefore, in those ages, making up a pretended original book out of floating traditions, would have been morally certain to apply the title Christians, whenever he had occasion, just as he and all those around him had been accustomed to do.

We, have here, therefore, a complete refutation of that rash conjecture I have been alluding to. The absence, throughout all the New Testament writings, of the word Christian, as applied by Christians to each other, alone furnishes, even to a plain unlearned reader, a complete proof of the antiquity of those writings.

And the anxiety of infidels to disprove that *antiquity* shews plainly how they despair of contending, in any other way, against their *truth*. Such accounts as these books contain of a multitude of wonderful events, could never possibly (if false) have been circulated without detection,

at the very time when those events are described as occurring.

As for the cause why the Apostles did not apply to their converts the title of Christians, even if we should be unable to offer any conjecture as to that, the argument for the antiquity of the New Testament remains (as I have said) untouched. Be the cause what it may, the fact is certain, that shortly after the apostolic age, and from thence downwards, to the present day, all Christian writers have applied the title of Christians, just as we do now; and that it never is so applied in any of twenty-seven books of the New Testament; which, consequently, must have been written in the very days of the Apostles. But I think we may perceive, on attentive examination, what the cause was of this procedure of the Apostles.

The name of Christians came into use (as I have said) first, at Antioch in Syria; where a Church was founded, consisting, in a great measure, of Gentile converts, whose admission into the Gospel covenant had just before been announced to the Apostle Peter. And this it was that seems to have occasioned the name to arise.

In the previous period of the Church,—for about the first seven years,—the Disciples being all Jews, the Romans were not likely to think it worth while to give them any other appellation than Jews. They did not trouble themselves about the different religious sects of a people they despised (*a*). But when they found a large and increasing body of men who consisted of both Jews and *Gentiles*, it became necessary to distinguish them by some name; and, naturally enough, they called them after their leader, Christ: which, though not his proper *name*, but his *title*, the Romans probably mistook for his name. I have already observed that the word Christian is of Latin formation, and must therefore have been coined by the Romans. But the same thing will appear, also, from the impossibility of its having originated with any other class of men. The Christians themselves certainly could not have been its inventors, since, as we have seen, they never used it. And the unbelieving Jews would never have employed a title which condemned themselves, by

(*a*) See Dr. Hinds' History of the Rise of Christianity.

implying that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ. To have called his disciples Christians, (*i. e.* followers of the Christ), would have been to acknowledge Him as the Christ; which was the very point the unbelieving Jews would not admit. They accordingly called his disciples Nazarenes; as you may see in Acts xxiv., where Paul is denounced as “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,” and this is the appellation which, down to this day, they prefer applying to us.

Since, therefore, the title of Christian could not have been introduced, either by the Christians themselves, or by the unbelieving Jews, it remains that it must have originated with the unconverted Gentiles; viz., the Romans, who found it requisite, for the first time, to give a name to a class of men comprehending both Jews by nation and Gentiles.

Now the admission of the Gentiles into the Church, (which is what gave occasion for the origin of the title of Christian), was, as you may plainly see in the narrative of the Book of Acts, and in the Epistles, the most wonderful and unexpected event to all parties in that age, and

the one which was the most revolting to Jewish prejudices. No point of faith did they hold more pertinaciously, (as, indeed, the unbelieving Jews do to this day), than that the Law of Moses, as originally delivered, was to remain in full force to the end of the world. And the promised Christ [or Messiah] they looked for as the deliverer of the Israelites by birth, together with such proselytes as should have made themselves a portion of God's People Israel, by embracing the whole Levitical Law. That the unclean and despised Gentiles should be admitted to equal privileges with the Jews, and that, without conforming to the Levitical Law, was so abhorrent to all their prejudices, that (as you may see in Acts x. and xi.) the Apostles themselves had very great difficulty in admitting it; and, afterwards, (as you may see in Acts xv., and in the Epistle to the Galatians), a great struggle was made, to confine, at least the highest privileges of the Gospel, to Jews and those proselytes who should have completely embraced Judaism.

The sufferings and death of the Christ, whom they had looked for as a mighty temporal deliverer;

and again, the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles to a complete equality with believing Jews : these were the two chief stumbling-blocks to the greater part of the Jewish nation. All their hopes, and expectations, and interpretations of prophecy, were utterly at variance with such a Gospel as this. And we cannot doubt that the objection constantly in their mouths would be, that such a Gospel implied a *change of purpose* in the Most High ;—that the Christian preachers represented Him as having violated his promises to the Israelites, and introduced a *new* religion, at variance with the original Dispensation.

Accordingly, we find the Apostle Paul meeting this objection by continually referring to the prophecies, to show that the Lord Jesus had (as He Himself expresses it) “ come not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them ; ” — that the prophecies, — though they had not been so understood, — did really point both to a *suffering* Messiah, and at the call of the Gentiles “ to be fellow-heirs ” of the promises ; being (as Peter expresses it) “ elect according to the fore-knowledge of God ; ” *i.e.* all along designed by Him to be enrolled among his Elect [or

chosen] people. And this is what Paul speaks of as “the *mystery* of the Gospel; which had been hidden from the foundation of the world, but now is made manifest.” And, in his speech before Agrippa, he gives a summary of his preaching: that he taught “none other things than what Moses and the Prophets did say should be; that the Christ should *suffer*,” (this was one of the two great stumbling-blocks), “and should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the People,” (*i. e.* God’s People, Israel), “and to the *Gentiles*.” this was the other great stumbling-block. And it was accordingly his being the chief Apostle of the Gentiles that exposed him to so much bitterer persecution than the rest. In support of these doctrines, he appeals to the Prophets: (“King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets?”) maintaining that the Gospel is no new religion, opposed to the Old Dispensation, but an enlargement and completion of the Old; not a destroying, but a fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets.

Now in order to impress this the more fully on the minds of the Disciples, who were con-

tinually in danger of being misled by Judaizing teachers, nothing can be more natural than that the Apostles should have taken the precaution, which we find, in point of fact, they do take, of abstaining from the use of any *new* title, such as that of Christians, and confining themselves altogether to those titles which were applied to God's People of old. We find, in the Old Testament, the Israelites perpetually called "Brethren," as being literally children of Israel after the flesh; they are also designated the "Called," and "Chosen," [or "Elect,"] People of God; not as being predestined absolutely to obtain his favour, but as being selected for certain high *privileges and advantages*, through which, they might, if they failed not on their part, obtain extraordinary favour. And they are also called a *holy* people, *i.e.* Saints, not as denoting that they personally excelled in holiness of character; but in the same sense in which certain *places* were called "holy," *dedicated*, and set apart, to God's service. All these titles accordingly, the Apostles applied to Christians of whatever nation; to point out to them that all are now alike admitted to the pri-

vileges of the ancient Church [or Congregation, as the word is rendered in our version of the Old Testament] of Israel ; only, with great additional ones ; all being "*brethren*," as being God's adopted children : ("as many as received Him," says the Evangelist John, "to them gave He power to become the Sons of God,") all being God's "Elect [or 'Chosen,'] people ;" all being Saints, or "Holy," in the sense of being solemnly dedicated to His service, as the Israelites had been of old ; and all being (as Paul calls them, in Galatians) "the Israel of God." "If," says he, "ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise." "Ye are," says Peter, "a chosen generation, [the word is the same which is elsewhere rendered by our translators 'Elect,'] a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [the word here rendered 'holy,' is the same which is elsewhere translated 'Saints,'] which before were not a People, but now are the People of God."

Such, I have no doubt, was the reason of the Apostles for confining themselves to these names, instead of employing that of Christians.

And this will explain also why, when these reasons had no longer the same force, these names became less employed, and that of Christian came gradually into ordinary use. When Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed, and the Jewish nation was dispersed, and the far greater number of Christians were Gentiles, the danger of Judaizing teachers, which in Paul's time was so great, seems almost to have died away; and Christians seem to have felt, (whether rightly or wrongly), that there was no longer any need of reminding them of what was now become so familiar to them, though originally a great paradox, that men of all nations had succeeded to the full privileges which had originally been confined to the Jews, and were all admitted alike to be God's people. And hence, immediately after the age of the Apostles, the term Christians gradually began to come into use among themselves, as it remains down to this day.

In conformity with what I have been saying, you will observe that Paul constantly uses these appellations, not as implying that his hearers *had* attained superior Christian excellence, but as suggesting a *motive* for their exerting themselves

to attain it. He never tells any of them to expect any "*call*," but addresses them all as "called Saints," and exhorts them to "*walk worthy* of the vocation whereto they are called." He never speaks of their *becoming* elect, but exhorts them (Col. iii. 12) "*as the elect of God, holy, [or Saints], to put on mercy, kindness, and humbleness,*" and to "*give diligence to make their calling and election sure.*" Never does he exhort them to *be* Saints (*a*), but to "*walk as becometh Saints;*" never, to *enter into* any brotherhood, but "*to love as brethren.*" The titles, in short, which he applies, all denote their *privileges* and their *duties*; not their good *use* of those privileges, and faithful *performance* of those duties. It is to that use and that performance that he *exhorts* them. And he warns them (*e.g.* i. Cor. x.) from the example of God's people of old, against neglecting or abusing their

(*a*) The Apostle Peter in one passage uses the word *αγιοι* ["*holy*" or "*Saints*"] in the sense of that personal holiness of life to which he exhorts his hearers to aim. There may perhaps be one or two other instances of its being so employed by the sacred writers; but the other sense—the one above described—is undoubtedly the ordinary one.

high privileges. All the Israelites were God's "Chosen" [or Elect], but "with most of them^(a) God was not well pleased," as was shown by their being overthrown in the wilderness.— "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

It has happened, I think unfortunately, that in adopting the designation of Christians (to which there can be no objection) we have, at the same time, changed in a great degree the signification of the term "*Saints*." It is now generally used to denote, not all Christians,—all who have been dedicated to Christ in baptism,—but some particular Christians distinguished from the rest, either as having received the gift of inspiration,—as we speak of *Saint Mathew*, *Saint Mark*, *Saint Paul*, and the rest of the Apostles and Evangelists,—or else as being supposed to possess an extraordinary degree or kind of personal holiness, beyond what is expected of ordinary Christians. These notions have, in their most exaggerated form, led to the practice which unhappily prevails, and has for many ages prevailed, among a very

(a) τοις πλειοσιν

large portion of the Christian world, of invoking deceased Saints, and begging their intercession with the Most High; thus conferring on his creatures the attribute of omnipresence—each of these Saints being supposed to be able to hear the invocations of millions of votaries in many thousand different parts of the world, who are addressing him at the same time!

But even those who have kept clear of this error are yet often found attributing to those whom they designate “Saints,” such a degree and kind of personal holiness as is far from being required or expected of Christians in general, and which it would be most extravagant for them to aim at or hope for.

One may often, accordingly, hear persons professing to have no pretensions to be considered as *Saints*, or thought of ever becoming such; though at the same time they would be indignant at not being considered as *Christians*. And yet the Apostles, as we have seen, always used the word *Saints* as equivalent to what we mean by *Christians*.

What would have been, think you, the astonishment of Paul, could he now return to the earth,

at hearing professed believers in Christ disavowing all claim to the title of "Saints"? This horror and astonishment would indeed be much diminished when he came to understand that we use the word in a very different sense from his. But without denying our right to make such a change, I cannot but think he would have questioned the wisdom of doing so in this instance. Evangelists, and Prophets, and Apostles, I think he would consider as best distinguished by the very titles of "Evangelist" and "Prophet" and "Apostle," rather than by that of "Saint," which in Scripture is applied to every one of God's People—to every member of what is called in the oldest of the creeds, "the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." For the saintship of the Apostles and Evangelists consisted (according to the language of Scripture) not in what was peculiar to *them*, but in what was common to them with others; not in their inspiration and other miraculous gifts, but in those gifts offered to Christians generally, which are of incomparably higher value. And of this, at least, I cannot doubt; that Paul would earnestly warn us against being misled by our own use of language;—against fall-

ing into confusion of thought, and into serious error respecting *things*, through the careless employment of *words*. Most earnestly, we may be assured, would he warn us that Christianity is not two religions,—one for ordinary men, and another for Saints,—but one single religion, designed for all men alike, and not setting up several different standards of personal holiness for different persons. He would warn us against being led to imagine that there are among the number of Christians certain classes or parties, or orders of men, of whom a Christian life—a conformity of character to the Gospel precepts—is *more* required, or is *less* required, than of the generality. “They that are Christ’s (says this Apostle) have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.” He speaks not, you observe, of what can be done, and is required to be done, by certain pre-eminent Saints, but of “*any man*” who has enlisted at baptism under the banner of Christ crucified. In the sense in which Paul accounted himself a Saint, in that sense he calls all Christians Saints.

As for the saintship which consists in the possession of inspiration from Heaven, or of any other miraculous gifts, great is the mistake of imagining that such gifts render the possessor necessarily acceptable in God's sight, and are to be regarded as a *substitute* for moral holiness of character ; or again, that these supernatural gifts necessarily *ensure* personal holiness ; or again, that the *absence* of such gifts renders a less degree of personal holiness sufficient. God enabled some to speak in new languages ; of them it was required that they should use the gift to his glory, and the good of their fellow creatures, in preaching the Gospel throughout the world. To others was "given the gift of healing, by the same Spirit ;" it was *their* task to heal the sick accordingly. To others is given *only* the knowledge of the Gospel, and the promise of Divine aid to help their infirmities, and to enable them to conform their own heart and life to the precepts and example of their Lord : and these also are required thus to conform, and to make the best use of their own advantages. No where are we told that a less degree of Christian virtue is requisite in one who does not possess miraculous endow-

ments. For, these endowments were designed, not for the benefit of the possessor, but of his neighbours. Miracles were the instruments the Lord employed for the propagation of his Gospel among all nations; that men might glorify, not the man who exercised such superhuman powers, but God. The inspired preachers and writers were inspired for the purpose of instructing *us* in the Gospel of their Divine Master.

But would it not be presumptuous for any one of *us* in these days to pretend to be as good a Christian as Paul or Peter, or any other of those we call emphatically “Saints”?

Presumptuous indeed it would be to *pretend* to a high degree of Christian excellence—to “count oneself to *have* apprehended”: but to *aim* at attaining that excellence, through divine assistance, is so far from being presumptuous, that there is more presumption in cherishing a hope of God’s favor without it. It would indeed be a most impious presumption for one of us to pretend to inspiration; because we have it not. It would be presumptuous for one of us to expect to be as eminent an instrument in propagating the Gospel among all nations as the Apostle Paul; because

we are not so qualified by miraculous gifts as he was. But we are *not* less enabled, or less bound, each one of us, himself to perform his own Christian duties—to lead a Christian life, and to have a Christian heart; and in short (as Paul expresses it) to “walk as becometh Saints,” than the Apostles themselves. And there is great and dangerous presumption in the false humility of hoping for acceptance with our Great Master while we lower our own standard of personal Christian holiness, and claim an exemption from the duty of aiming at the highest degree of Christian moral excellence, on the ground that we are not gifted with miraculous powers.

These powers were given, as I have said, not for the benefit of the possessors, but of others, for *their* conviction and instruction. And the possession of these miraculous gifts neither *proved* any one to be personally pure and holy in heart, nor necessarily *made* him such. Judas Iscariot, we should remember, exercised, in common with the other Apostles, miraculous powers, during our Lord’s abode on earth. Many of the Corinthians, again, are severely rebuked by Paul for their strange abuse of some of their miraculous

gifts. The Lord Jesus himself speaks of his finally disowning, as “workers of iniquity,” some who should have “done many mighty works in his name.” And Paul speaks strongly of his own sedulous care as to his own life, “lest by any means after having preached to others, he should himself become a castaway.”

Let no one therefore suppose either that *more*, or that *less*, of Christian virtue is requisite for an Apostle or Prophet than for an uninspired Christian. Both alike are, in the scriptural sense of the word, “Saints;” and both alike are enabled, and therefore required, to “walk as becometh Saints.” Whether a man have received heavenly light by immediate personal inspiration, or through the words of an inspired Evangelist, in either case he *has* been blessed with that light, and both are required to live “as children of the light.” Those who have no power to cast out evil spirits from the possessed, are yet enabled and required to cast them out from themselves—to “resist the Devil, and he will flee from them.” Those who have no miraculous gifts of healing the sick and cleansing the leprous, are yet empowered, and therefore expected, to apply to the

Great Physician of Souls for the cure of their own spiritual diseases, and to “purify themselves even as He is pure.” And those who have not the gift of tongues, are yet called on to do their best towards diffusing the knowledge and practice of the Gospel-religion among all who do lie within their reach.

That valuable Institution, the members of which are now assembled, and for which we are anxious to obtain a more general and active support from the Public, is so constituted as to enable all, whether clergy or laymen, to take some share—a share which they must rejoice to take, if they are Christians in any thing but in name—in the great work of promoting the coming of Christ’s kingdom, and the doing of “His will on earth as in heaven,” which they daily pray for. By contributing towards the support of Ministers in places where their services are much needed, and cannot without such contributions be obtained,—by thus preserving multitudes of our brethren from spiritual destitution, from gross religious ignorance, from pernicious error, from irreligion, and from sin,—the Laity as well as the Clergy may have a share in

forwarding the great work for which their Saviour lived and died.

Is there any Layman of our Church who is disposed to say in his heart—"this is a valuable Institution, and one to which the *Clergy* ought to contribute liberally; it is a holy and an important work, and one which ought to excite great interest among the *Clergy*; but religious matters are more properly *their* concern, Laymen cannot be expected to take any particular interest in the propagation of religion?"

I dwelt in the beginning of this discourse on the error of regarding Christianity as *two* religions—one for ordinary Christians, and another for "Saints"—for the "Elect"—for God's People,"—or some particular class, party, or order of men. I dwelt, I say, on that error in especial reference to this occasion, because the prevalence of the error and its evil consequences are in no point more observable than in what relates to the distinction between the Clergy and the Laity. That there is a distinction of *offices* between the two is undeniable; but so far forth as they are Christians—*i. e.* (in the apostolic sense of the word) *Saints*, there is no distinction. And yet

does it not often happen that such actions and such habits of life as are clearly at variance, not with the *ministerial* character only, but with the *Christian* character, are, by the world in general, thought very lightly of in a Layman, though in a Clergyman they would be severely censured? Is it not notorious that many duties which, if the teaching of Christ and the Apostles is to be received, are not merely *clerical* duties but *Gospel* duties, are either wholly neglected, or very little attended to, by such as have not taken *holy orders*? And this temper of mind is found not least in many of those who are among the most rigid in their demands of an exemplary performance of Christian duties by the Clergy. It is commonly (and very truly) said, that the Clergy ought to be men of *exemplary life*; i.e. a life which sets a good *example* to their people: but it is remarkable that this truth is by none more earnestly dwelt on than by some of those who seem never even to think of being bound to *follow* that example, by leading the same sort of life *themselves*. Now if they really hope for salvation by means of their *pastor's* good conduct,—by *his* practice of Christian virtue in their stead,—

they ought at least to be consistent in their language, and to call it, not *exemplary* virtue, but *vicarious* virtue.

But to pass over the case of those who tolerate in themselves unchristian habits, or who neglect Christian duties, generally, and to confine myself to one branch of Christian duty, that of labouring to spread among all, and especially among our brethren, the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion, what do we find—and what ought we to find—among the lay members of our Church? Most true it is, that a Layman is not justified in taking on himself any that are exclusively ministerial functions—in intruding himself into what are strictly clerical offices. I only wish each one who hears me to consider how far, and in what way, *without* any such intrusion, it is *possible*, and *consequently a duty*, for him to assist towards promoting that coming of Christ's kingdom which he is accustomed to pray for; and next, to consider how far he is himself performing that duty.

We all know that it is the proper office of the Ministers of our Church to lead the devotions of the congregation according to the prayer-book,

and to administer the Sacraments to them, and publicly to preach and expound to them the Scriptures. Is it also their sole, or their especial office to bear all the expenses of every institution for the diffusion of Christian knowledge and practice? Can delicate scruples, and conscientious dread of unduly intruding into the ministerial office, hold back any one from contributing towards *such* an object? Can he think that indifference in such a cause, though unbecoming the *profession* of a *Clergyman*, is consistent with the profession of a *Christian*?—that the Clergy may be expected to feel a great interest in such matters; but that it is hardly to be looked for in the Laity?

If there be any who entertain *these* sentiments, I would ask such a one what he would think of our doctrine, if we were to teach that the highest glories of Heaven are reserved for the Clergy exclusively; that the souls of Laymen are of comparatively small account in their Redeemer's sight; and that the best Christians must be content with a very humble and inferior place in the mansions of eternal bliss, unless they have been admitted to holy Orders? How great would be

the indignation at such a groundless and arrogant assumption on our part, that would be felt and expressed by all;—by all, including all those who are content to forego all pretensions to an equal share in Christian *zeal*, in Gospel *duties*—though not to forego their equal claim to Christian *hopes*, to Gospel *promises*, to heavenly happiness!

Let any one of you, my Christian friends, who does feel that gratitude and love to his Saviour—that high value for the blessing of Gospel light, which prompts him to seek how he may *do* something to manifest his sense of mercies received—let any such person behold in this Society an opportunity of promoting “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;” not merely worldly peace, but heavenly, and divine good-will towards men.

But if again, any one feels conscious within his own heart that his Christian gratitude, and love, and zeal, fall lamentably short of what he knows he *ought* to feel; and if he sincerely desires to kindle into warmth those sentiments which are but coldly alive within him; let him behold here one of the best exercises by which

to foster and strengthen those sentiments. For as we may observe in all departments of life, actively befriending any one increases our regard for him ; actively serving our country strengthens the feeling of patriotism ; activity in the service of a party strengthens party-spirit ; and so of the rest. A cause in which we have exerted ourselves becomes more and more endeared to us through those very efforts. Act therefore as you *would* spontaneously and gladly act if you *had* those Christian feelings, and that Christian zeal which you know the Christian *ought* to have, and which you wish to generate and encourage in your own breast ; and the very outward acts themselves, coupled with earnest petitions for Divine Grace, will produce, and strengthen, and keep up that very disposition of which such acts are the natural fruit.

I know indeed that the severe pressure of that awful visitation of famine which has fallen on this land, renders it doubly difficult at the present time to support any institution which, like this, depends on voluntary contributions. But I would remind any one who may be disposed to make this a plea for withholding contributions from this

Society, to consider that this pressure has fallen with most especial severity on the Clergy ; whose means, generally speaking, are very slender, and whose charities have often more than exhausted their means ; so that there is more need than ever for aid from the Laity to support any important institution which, if left to the unassisted efforts of the Clergy, must finally become extinct. But independently of this consideration, I would remind you, that to regard bodily wants and sufferings as alone calling for charitable relief, and to pay little or no attention to spiritual wants—to diseases of the soul—to the needs of those who may, or who should “hunger and thirst after righteousness”—would be quite at variance with the principles of the Gospel, and with the precepts and the example of its Author. He fed the hungry indeed, and healed the sick ; but his *main* object was to teach men to know and to do the will of their Heavenly Father. He exhorted his hearers to “labour not so much for the meat that perisheth,” as for that “which endureth unto everlasting life ;” and “to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” in preference to taking anxious thought what they should eat

and drink; and He taught us, in His own form of prayer, *before* we ask for our “daily bread,” to pray that his “kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

If you are in earnest when you utter those words, your actions must be of a piece with your prayers. Endeavour therefore to make known as widely as possible the existence, and the real character, and the strong claims to support, of this Society; and strive to induce your friends and neighbours—most especially by setting them the *example*—to contribute liberally, according to their ability, to its very scanty funds. Exhort those who are rich to give bountifully, and those whose means are small to remember that He who commended the widow’s mite has taught us not to be ashamed to give a little, if we give not grudgingly but gladly; since “it is a cheerful giver that God loveth.”

And pray therefore that He will implant in you and in your brethren a grateful, a liberal, and a Christian heart. Pray also that He will be pleased to bless our efforts in His holy cause; and that at least that cause may not suffer through any remissness on your part;—through

any preference, in you, of the perishable riches of this world, to the "treasure which neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal."

THE END.

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THE
SEARCH AFTER INFALLIBILITY,
CONSIDERED
IN REFERENCE TO THE DANGER OF
RELIGIOUS ERRORS ARISING WITHIN THE CHURCH
IN THE
PRIMITIVE AS WELL AS IN ALL LATER AGES.
BEING
A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED
In the Cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin,
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE ORDINATION HELD ON SUNDAY, THE 22ND AUGUST, 1847.

BY
RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.,
ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

Second Edition, revised and enlarged.

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TO
THE CANDIDATES
ORDAINED AT CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN,
ON SUNDAY, THE 22ND AUGUST, 1847,
THIS DISCOURSE,
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS DEDICATED,
WITH EARNEST WISHES FOR THEIR PRESENT AND ETERNAL WELFARE,
AND FOR THE DIVINE BLESSING ON THEIR MINISTERIAL LABOURS,
BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND AND FELLOW-LABOURER,
THE AUTHOR.



THE

SEARCH AFTER INFALLIBILITY.



ACTS, xx. 29, 30, 31.

“ I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

THIS parting admonition of the Apostle Paul to the Christian ministers of the Churches of Miletus and Ephesus, cannot be read by any careful student of Scripture without deep interest. But it will be found, on attentive reflection, to suggest even more matter for profitable meditation, and even more of instructive practical lessons, than might at first sight appear.

And to some of these I propose now to call your attention.

I. In the first place you will observe, that what the Apostle here says to the clergy whom he is addressing, is of a piece with much that we find in several of his Epistles. In his Epistles to the Corinthians, especially the Second, he warns them against "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ, and ministers of righteousness;" even as "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light:"—men seeking to disparage Paul's apostolic authority, and to introduce doctrines opposed to his. "There must be," says he, "heresies among you, that they which are approved [*δοκιμοι*] may be made manifest among you."—1 Cor. xi. 19. The Epistle to the Galatians, again, is almost made up of similar cautions. The Philippians also are warned [chap. iii.], in like manner, to be on their guard against teachers who corrupted the Gospel. Cautions of the same kind are addressed to almost all the other Churches to which he wrote; and both Timothy and Titus are earnestly and repeatedly exhorted to watch against the inroads of these corruptions.

The Apostle Peter also cautions the disciples against those "unlearned and unstable" persons, who "wrest," he tells them, "the Scriptures to their own destruction."

The Apostle John, again, in his Epistles, is chiefly occupied in warning his hearers against those false prophets,—those “wolves, in sheep’s clothing,”—of whom his Master had prophesied, and bid His disciples beware.

And here we find Paul, in his farewell address to the Elders, earnestly reiterating the solemn warning of this danger, which, he tells them, he had been continually repeating for three years. “From among themselves,” he tells them,—“from the very bosom of their own Church,”—men will arise teaching perverted doctrines(*a*), “to draw away [the] disciples(*b*) after themselves.”

Now it might seem wonderful, or even incredible, if we had not these records before us, that any such thing should have taken place; I mean, that in the very times of the Apostles themselves, whose authority from Heaven was attested by their miraculous powers, any false teachers should have not only arisen, but should have gained a hearing, and been able to draw away the disciples by pretending to an authority equal or superior to that of the genuine Apostles. And if we had not providentially pos-

(*a*) *ῥευστραμμενα.*

(*b*) *τοὺς μαθητάς.*

sessed these records of the early dangers of the Church, we might have been disheartened or utterly thrown into despondency at the view of the various errors introduced in later times by men of high pretensions as religious teachers. We might have felt as if God had forsaken His Church when He withdrew from it the guidance of the inspired Apostles, and left Christians to find their safety in vigilant and careful and candid examination of every doctrine taught. But, as it is, we see that, from the very first, this care and watchfulness were indispensably necessary to guard against the danger of false teachers introducing corruptions of the genuine Gospel. Strange and incredible as it may seem to us that any such men should have attempted, and should have succeeded in the attempt, to rival the Apostles, we are distinctly informed that so it was: and that Christians were then required to be on their guard against the grievous wolves in sheep's clothing, who would enter in, not sparing the flock.

We ought not, therefore, either to wonder, or to despond, at finding Christians in all subsequent ages exposed to the same dangers, and called on to exercise the same vigilance, as in the very times of the Apostles themselves.

II. And this leads me, in the second place, to the consideration of the way in which Paul tells his hearers to provide against the danger.

Does he promise them that the *primitive* Church shall be safe from it?—that no inroads of error will take place for the first three or four centuries? On the contrary, he speaks of the danger as immediate.

Or does he tell them that they will find their safety in *apostolical succession*?—that it is miraculously provided that no teacher shall ever mislead them, who has but been regularly ordained by himself, or by those appointed by him to succeed him in the office of ordaining? On the contrary, he warns the Elders that even from the midst of their own Body,—of their own selves,—will arise men teaching a perverted Gospel to draw away the disciples after them.

Or again, does he tell them that when any point of doubt and difficulty arises, they are to find safety in making a reference to Peter, and to those who shall be divinely appointed from time to time as his successors and representatives, for infallible decisions and directions? Not a word is said of any Apostle but himself; or of any one who should succeed him in the apostolic office. To himself, during his life,

they would naturally apply by letter, if opportunity offered, for directions in any case of doubt that might arise. But not even any Apostle,—much less any successor of an Apostle,—is mentioned by Paul as the oracular guide, whom, after his own death, they were to consult.

Or, does he bid them resort to some central Church,—whether at Jerusalem, or at Rome, or at Byzantium,—and seek there for infallible guidance(*a*) ?

Or does he direct them to summon a General Council, and refer every question that may arise to the decision of a majority of its votes ; with a full assurance that these should be so supernaturally overruled by the Holy Spirit as to secure them from the possibility of error ?

No: he makes no allusion whatever to any other Church or Prelate ; to any successor of Peter or of the other Apostles ; or to any infallible Council, as their guide. But he tells them to TAKE HEED TO THEMSELVES, and to the flock they are set over ; he

(*a*) See the Remarks on the “Pillar and Ground of the Truth,” in Dr. Hinds’s most valuable Tract on “Scripture and the Authorized Version.” There is a strong preponderance of probability in favour of his view.

tells them to "*watch*;" and he exhorts them to remember his own earnest warnings to them.

Now, if there *had* been provided by the Most High, any such safeguard as I have alluded to,—if Paul had known of any Order of men, any Prelate, any particular Church, or General Council, designed by Providence as an infallible guide, and a sure remedy against errors and corruptions, would he not have been sure, on such an occasion as this, to give notice of it to his hearers? If, when he foresaw a perilous navigation for the vessel of the Church, he had known of a safe port, just at hand, and readily accessible, is it credible that he would have never alluded to it, but have left them exposed to the storms? Would he have been, in that case, "pure"—as he declares he was—"from the blood of all men?" Can any one seriously think, that against the dangers which he had been warning them of, and weeping over, for three years, he knew of a complete safeguard, and yet was so wanting in his duty,—so careless of their well-being,—as never to make the slightest mention of anything of the kind? To suppose this would be to suppose him destitute not only of all faithfulness in his high office, but of common prudence and rationality.

And yet if any such provision really had been made by the Author of our faith, it is utterly inconceivable that the Apostle Paul should have been—and that too on such an occasion as this—left in utter ignorance of its existence. Whatever may be the precise meaning of our Lord's promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," it is at least perfectly clear what it could *not* mean: it could not relate to something either unknown to Paul, or kept back by him from his hearers. All that he knew, and that it was for their benefit to learn, he had, as he solemnly declares, taught to them; and this was no less, he assures them, than "the whole counsel and design of God." "I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remem-

ber, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears."

From all this we may learn, among other things, how great is the mistake of those who are satisfied to trace up some doctrine or practice not countenanced by Scripture, to a very early period; to what they call the Primitive Church; and consider this as establishing a divine sanction for what may have been, after all, one of the "perverse things" introduced by false teachers, and against which Paul so earnestly warned the Elders.

III. The third remark which I have to make on this passage is, that the exposure of Christians to these dangers, and the call upon them,—both ministers and laity,—for the continued exercise of vigilant caution,—this is far from appearing to us either *acceptable* or *probable*. It is not at all what man's *wishes* would have called for, or his *conjectures* anticipated, in a divine Revelation; but is aliene both from his feelings and from his reasonings.

1. To examine and re-examine,—to reason and reflect,—to hesitate, and to decide with caution,—to be always open to evidence,—and to acknowledge that, after all, we are liable to error;—all this is, on many accounts, unacceptable to the human mind,—both to

its diffidence and to its pride,—to its indolence,—its dread of anxious cares,—and to its love of self-satisfied and confident repose. And hence there is a strong prejudice in favour of any system which promises to put an end to the work of inquiry at once and for ever, and to relieve us from all embarrassing doubt and uncomfortable self-distrust. And this is done, either by setting forth the authority of an infallible Church, which is to prescribe, on every point, what we are to believe and to do; thus relieving us from all trouble and anxiety, and from all necessity of acting on the Apostle's warning to "take heed to ourselves;" or again, by putting in place of such a Church, *immediate inspiration* from Heaven, whether bestowed on each individual who belongs to a certain sect or party, or on some highly-gifted leader, who will communicate to his followers the messages he receives from Heaven. Widely different in many points as these sects, and parties, and churches are from each other, they all agree in the one fundamental point just noticed. They all address themselves to that powerful principle in human nature I have been adverting to, the *craving for infallibility* in religious matters.

I call it "a craving for infallibility" (although

hardly any one is found in words claiming, or expecting to be, personally infallible), because it is evident that he who is infallibly following an infallible guide, is himself infallible. If his decisions on each point coincide exactly with those of an authority which is exempt from error, that *his* decisions are exempt from error, is not only an undeniable, but almost an identical proposition;—it is as plain as that things which are equal to the same are equal to each other.

But this, though self-evident as soon as stated, is sometimes lost sight of in practice. A man will speak of himself as being fallible, and as having no expectation of being otherwise. But his meaning must be (supposing him quite certain that he has an infallible guide, always accessible, and to which he constantly conforms),—his meaning must be, that he *would* be fallible if left to himself; that his exemption from the possibility of error is not inherent, but derived. But actually and practically he does consider himself infallible.

Though the gnomon of a sun-dial has no power in itself to indicate the hour, yet when the sun shines on it, the motions of its shadow must be as correct as those of the sun's rays which it follows. And, in

like manner, *he* is infallible, practically, in his belief, who always believes exactly what an infallible Church or leader believes.

This craving, then, I say, for infallibility, predisposes men towards the pretensions, either of a supposed unerring Church, or of those who claim or who promise immediate inspiration. And, accordingly, I have known persons sometimes waver for a time between these two classes of pretensions, and ultimately give in to the one or to the other. And, again, you may find persons changing from the one to the other, and sometimes thus changing more than once(*a*); yet still always clinging to the confident expectation of finding that infallibility I have been speaking of. They are *inquiring* only after a way of exempting themselves from all further inquiry. Their *care* is only to relieve themselves ultimately from all further need of vigilant care. They are navigating in search of a perfectly safe haven in which the helm may be abandoned, and the vessel

(*a*) And it might be added, that one may find instances of the same individual, himself unchanged, exposed to severe censures, at different times, not only from different persons, but even from the same, first for refusing to join the one party, and afterwards for refusing to join the other, most opposed to it.

left to ride securely, without any need of watching the winds and currents, and of looking out for rocks and shoals. They hope to obtain, in all ages of the Church, that exemption from all need of vigilant circumspection, which was not granted even in the age of the Apostles; since we find that, even when there *were* these infallible guides on earth, Christians are perpetually warned of the danger of mistaking "false apostles" for genuine.

2. But the promise of such infallible guidance as I have been speaking of, not only meets man's wishes, but, as I have observed above, his conjectures also. When we give the reins to our own feelings and fancies, such a provision appears as probable as it is desirable. If, antecedently to the distinct announcement of any particular Revelation, men were asked what kind of revelation they would *wish* to obtain, and again, what kind of Revelation they would think it the most reasonable and *probable* that God should bestow, they would be likely, I think, to answer *both* questions by saying, "Such a Revelation as should provide some infallible guide on earth, readily accessible to every man; so that no one could possibly be in doubt, on any point, as to what he was required to believe and to do; but

should be placed, as it were, on a kind of plain high road, which he would only have to follow steadily, without taking any care to look around him ; or, rather, in some kind of vehicle on such a road, in which he would be safely carried to his journey's end, even though asleep, provided he never quitted that vehicle.

“ For, a man might say, ‘ if a book is put into my hands containing a divine revelation, and in which are passages that may be differently understood by different persons,—even by those of learning and ability,—even by men professing each to have earnestly prayed for spiritual guidance towards the right interpretation thereof,—and if, moreover, this book contains, in respect of some points of belief and of conduct, no directions at all,—then there is a manifest *necessity* that I should be provided with an infallible interpreter of this book, who shall be always at hand to be consulted, and ready to teach me, without the possibility of mistake, the right meaning of every passage, and to supply all deficiencies and omissions in the book itself. For otherwise this revelation is, to *me*, no revelation at all. Though the book itself be perfectly free from all admixture of error,—though all that it asserts be

true, and all its directions right, still it is no guide for *me*, unless I have an infallible certainty, on each point, what its assertions and directions *are*. It is in vain to tell me that the pole-star is always fixed in the north; I cannot steer my course by it when it is obscured by clouds, so that I cannot be certain where that star is. I need a *compass* to steer by, which I can consult at all times. There is, therefore, a manifest necessity for an infallible and universally accessible interpreter on earth, as an indispensable accompaniment,—and indeed essential part,—of any divine revelation.’ ”

Such would be the reasonings, and such the feelings, of a man left to himself to consider what sort of revelation from Heaven would be the most acceptable, and also the most *probable*,—the most adapted to meet his *wishes* and his *wants*. And thus are men predisposed, both by their feelings and their antecedent conjectures, towards the admission of such pretensions as I have above alluded to.

And it may be added, that any one who is thus induced to give himself up implicitly to the guidance of such a supposed infallible authority, without presuming thenceforth to exercise his own judgment on any point relative to religion, or to think for

himself at all on such matters,—such a one will be likely to regard this procedure as the very perfection of pious *humility*,—as a most reverent observance of the rule of “lean not to thine own understanding;” though in reality it is the very error of improperly leaning to our own understanding. For, to resolve to believe that God *must* have dealt with mankind just in the way that *we* could *wish* as the most *desirable*, and in the way that to *us* seems the most *probable*,—this is, in fact, *to set up ourselves as His judges*. It is to dictate to Him, in the spirit of Naaman, who *thought* that the prophet would recover him by a touch; and who *chose* to be healed by the waters of Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, which he deemed better than all the waters of Israel.

But anything that falls in at once with men’s *wishes*, and with their *conjectures*, and which also presents itself to them in the guise of a *virtuous humility*,—this they are often found readily and firmly to believe, not only *without* evidence, but *against* all evidence.

And thus it is in the present case. The principle of which I have been speaking,—that every revelation from Heaven necessarily requires, as an

indispensable accompaniment, an infallible interpreter always at hand,—this principle clings so strongly to the minds of many men, that they are even found still to maintain it after they have ceased to believe in any revelation at all, or even in the existence of a God.

There can be, I conceive, no doubt of the fact, that very great numbers of men are to be found,—they are much more numerous in some parts of the Continent than among us(*a*);—men not deficient in intelligence, nor altogether strangers to reflection, who, while they, for the most part, conform externally to the prevailing religion, are inwardly utter unbelievers in Christianity; yet still hold to the principle,—which, in fact, has had the chief share in *making* them unbelievers,—that the idea of a DIVINE REVELATION implies that of a universally accessible, INFALLIBLE INTERPRETER; and that the one without the other is an absurdity and contradiction.

I have said that it is this principle that has mainly contributed to *make* these men unbelievers. For, when a tolerably intelligent and reflective man has fully satisfied himself that in point of fact no

(*a*) See note A at the end of this Discourse.

such provision *has* been made,—that no infallible and universally accessible interpreter does exist on earth (and this is a conclusion which even the very words of Paul, which I have taken as a text, would be alone fully sufficient to establish),—when, I say, he has satisfied himself of the *non-existence* of this interpreter, yet still adheres to the principle of its supposed *necessity*, the consequence is inevitable, that he will at once reject all belief of Christianity. The ideas of a REVELATION, and of an unerring INTERPRETER, being, in his mind, inseparably conjoined, the overthrow of the one belief cannot but carry the other along with it. Such a person, therefore, will be apt to think it not worth while to examine the reasons in favour of any other form of Christianity, *not* pretending to furnish an infallible interpreter. This,—which, he is fully convinced, is essential to a Revelation from Heaven,—is, by some Churches, *claimed*, but not *established*, while the rest do not even claim it. The pretensions of the one he has listened to, and deliberately rejected ; those of the other he regards as not even worth listening to.

The system, then, of reasoning from our own conjectures as to the necessity of the Most High doing so and so, tends to lead a man to proceed

from the rejection of his own form of Christianity to a rejection of revelation altogether. But does it stop here ? Does not the same system lead naturally to Atheism also ? Experience shews that that consequence, which reason might have anticipated, does often actually take place. He who gives the reins to his own conjectures as to what is *necessary*, and thence draws his conclusions, will be likely to find a *necessity* for such divine interference in the affairs of the world as does not in fact take place. He will deem it no less than necessary, that an omnipotent and all-wise and beneficent Being should interfere to rescue the oppressed from the oppressor,—the corrupted from the corrupter,—to deliver men from such temptations to evil as it is morally impossible they should withstand ;—and, in short, to banish *evil* from the universe. And, since this is not done, he draws the inference that there cannot possibly be a God, and that to believe otherwise is a gross absurdity. Such a belief he may, indeed, consider as useful for keeping up a wholesome awe in the minds of the vulgar ; and for their sakes he may outwardly profess Christianity also ; even as the heathen philosophers of old endeavoured to keep up the popular superstitions : but a real belief he will

regard as something impossible to an intelligent and reflective mind.

I am very far from saying that all, or the greater part, of those who maintain the principle I am speaking of, are Atheists. We all know how common it is for men to fail of carrying out some principle (whether good or bad) which they have adopted ;—how common, to maintain the premises, and not perceive the conclusion to which they lead. But the *tendency* of the *principle* itself is what I am speaking of: and the danger is anything but imaginary, of its leading, in fact, as it does naturally and consistently, to Atheism as its ultimate result.

I have said that the non-existence of such an infallible interpreter as I have been alluding to, is what an intelligent man might be convinced of even by the very passage in the Book of Acts that is before us ;—by the absence of any reference or allusion to anything of the kind, in a discourse of the Apostle Paul's, in which he could not have failed to mention it, had it existed. But there are many other considerations from which the same conclusion follows:

1. For instance, the incompetency of men in ge-

neral to exercise a correct judgment on questions pertaining to religion, is the main argument from which is inferred the necessity of an infallible interpreter. And yet this very argument destroys the ultimate conclusion maintained. For it presupposes that men *are* fit to decide, by their own judgment, that most difficult question, as to the claim of any particular Church, Party, or Person to *be* that interpreter. Certain passages of Scripture are alleged as implying that a certain Church is the infallible guide appointed by Providence to supersede our private judgment, which is incapable of deciding aright as to the meaning of Scripture. But how am I to know that such is the true sense of those passages? If we *are* competent to judge of their meaning, then our alleged unfitness for judging, and the necessity thence inferred, are done away. If we are *not* competent to judge of the meaning of any doubtful passages, then, though we may admit the necessity of an unerring interpreter, we can never be sure that we have found one.

If,—which I believe is practically the commonest procedure,—we interpret those passages in conformity with the decision of our supposed infallible guide, and, in implicit reliance on that, we are pal-

pably begging the question,—first assuming the infallibility of our guide, and by means of that assumption proceeding to prove it. And the same may be said in reference to those who, instead of any existing Church, appeal to “the Primitive Church,” and the “consensus Patrum,”—the common belief of all the orthodox writers of the first ages(*a*). Whether that primitive Church, and those first ages, shall comprehend *three* centuries, or *four*, *five*, *six*, or *seven*; and

(*a*) The reference so often made to the words of Vincentius Lirinensis,—“quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,” &c.—seems altogether unaccountable. That whatever is believed, and always has been, by all Christians, everywhere, is a part of the Christian faith, is a truism as barren as it is undeniable. It cannot possibly be called in to solve *any question in dispute*; since by its own character it relates expressly and exclusively to such points as *never have* been disputed among Christians.

But I conceive that those who appeal,—or rather, who pretend to appeal,—to this maxim, do, in reality, mean by “all,” merely “all the *orthodox*.” And who are the orthodox? I suppose, those whom *most* persons accounted such, and as each will be likely to apply that term to those whose doctrines he approves, the result will be, that the belief of the *majority* is to be the stamp of *orthodox belief*; and that this again is to represent *universal* [or catholic] belief; and, finally, that this so-called universal belief is to be the test of Gospel Truth.

On this principle, who were the orthodox and who the true worshippers, in Israel, when Elijah alone was left of the Lord’s prophets, when Baal’s prophets were 450 men?

which of the Fathers are to be enrolled among the orthodox, and *what are* the doctrines they taught, in works forty times more voluminous than the Bible, and capable of quite as great a variety of interpretations,—all these are questions to be decided in the first instance, by those who are, by supposition, incompetent judges, and who for that very reason are to rely implicitly on an infallible guide ! This is to tell them that, because they cannot steer their course without a pilot, they must make a voyage to a distant port in order to find one.

And the case is much the same with those who promise, or who lay claim to, such an inspiration from heaven as shall supersede all exercise of reason, and preclude the possibility of error. The exercise of reason is called for in the highest degree, and errors the most fatal are to be dreaded, in deciding on the conflicting claims laid before us,—on the claims of those who, while they teach the most opposite doctrines, all profess alike to be under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, and all fail in giving proof of it, as the Apostles did, by working sensible miracles in the presence of all, whether believers or unbelievers.

The alleged *necessity*, therefore, of an infallible

interpreter, does of itself shut out from a reflecting mind the hope of *obtaining* one. For that necessity is inferred from such a supposed incapacity in us for judging rightly, as must equally unfit us for judging what claim to our confidence those have who offer to guide us.

2. Again, the alleged necessity is, for an infallible interpreter universally and readily *accessible*. And this no Church can even pretend to have provided. Supposing a central infallible Church to exist, it is not one Christian in ten thousand that can put himself in direct communication with its supreme governors. Each individual may, indeed, use its formularies, and may assign to them the same authority as to Scripture ; but he can be no more competent to interpret the one than the other, or to supply aright any omissions ; he is still in want of an infallible guide to direct him how to conform with unerring exactitude to his Church. And this guide must be, to the great mass of mankind, the *pastor* under whom each is placed. The pastor's conformity to the Church must be taken on his own word. If *he* be either ignorant, or erroneous, or dishonest,—if, in short, every individual pastor be not himself

infallible, the Christian people, whose incompetency to judge for themselves has been all along presupposed, may be as much misled as in their perusal of the Scriptures.

3. Moreover, the claim to exemption from *error* and from *dissension*, if put forth by any Church which claims also *universality*, is thereby at once destroyed. If, indeed, any one claims infallibility on the ground of personal *inspiration* in himself, or in the leader he follows, he can only be met by a demand for proof, in the shape of *sensible miracles*, that his pretensions to this inspiration are better founded than those of others who differ from him. But when the two claims, to exemption from error and to universality, are *both* put forward, they mutually destroy each other by their practical incompatibility. If there be any universal Church of which *all professing Christians* are members, even though disobedient members,—subjects and children, even though undutiful and rebellious,—then this Church is manifestly not exempt from *error* and *dissension*; as is plain from the differences and controversies existing among Christians, and the refusal of many of them to submit to the decrees of this Church. If, again,

there be any Church that is exempt from error among its members, it is, for the same reason, manifestly not *universal*. There may, conceivably, be a Church to whose dominion and decisions all Christians *ought* to submit; but unless all *do* thus submit it cannot be properly called *universal*(a).

Vain are the attempts made to get rid of this dilemma by urging that all false doctrines are *condemned* by the Authorities of the Church, and that the guilt of schism is incurred by all who do not obey them. Exemption from error, in any community, consists, not in the *condemnation* of error, but in its *non-existence* among the members of that community. Universality consists, not in a *claim* to universal dominion over all Christians, but in the *submission* of all Christians. Otherwise, there is no sect so small and inconsiderable that might not pretend, on equally good grounds, to be the universal and unerring Church. It might plead that its doctrines were received by *all* except *heretics*, and its supremacy acknowledged by *all* except *schismatics*; denouncing

(a) The urging of both these pretensions in conjunction, on reasons which profess to establish the one or the other separately, is an instance of what I have called, in the Elements of Logic, book iii. § 11, the *fallacy of the Thaumatrope*.

all as heretics and schismatics who did *not* receive those doctrines, and submit to that dominion. And this is merely saying, in other words, that all agree with it except those who disagree, and that all submit except such as refuse submission.

The claims, therefore, if so explained, become altogether nugatory. If *not* so explained, but taken in the natural sense of the language employed, they are negated by undeniable and notorious facts(*a*).

From these and similar considerations a reflecting mind can hardly fail to arrive at the conclusion that a universally accessible infallible guide, such as shall supersede all exercise of private judgment, and all need of vigilant care and inquiry, and shall preclude all possibility of error, has *not* been, in fact, provided. And if he still cling to the belief of the *necessity* of such a guide as an indispensable adjunct to a divine revelation, his road to infidelity is straight and short(*b*).

Numbers there are, no doubt, who do not follow up such principles to their legitimate consequences;

(*a*) See note B at the end of this Discourse.

(*b*) See note C at the end of this Discourse.

many, from habitual want of reflection, and absence of mental cultivation; and others, from resolutely abstaining from all reasoning and all investigation, because they have determined to be believers, and consider their faith to be both the more praiseworthy, and also the more secure, the less they reflect and examine(*a*). They dread the very danger I have been alluding to,—that reasoning will lead to infidelity; and they seek to avoid this danger, not by discarding the false principle from which that reasoning sets out, but by shunning all reasoning, and stifling all inquiry and reflection.

But this freedom from all uneasy doubt,—a desire for which leads to that craving for infallibility I have been speaking of,—this, after all, is not always attained by such a procedure. A lurking suspicion will often remain,—which a man vainly endeavours to stifle,—that the *foundation* is not sound. The superstructure, indeed, may be complete. Once granted that the church, sect, party, or leader, we have taken as our guide, is perfectly infallible, and there is an end of all doubts and cares respecting

(*a*) See *Essays on some Dangers to Christian Faith, &c.*, p. 108 [2nd edition], and *Elements of Logic*, p. 390 [8th edition], for a very curious exemplification of what is here said.

particular points. But an uneasy doubt will sometimes haunt a man,—in spite of his efforts to repress it, and however strenuously he may deny, even to himself, its existence,—whether the infallibility claimed, which is the basis of the whole fabric, be really well established. A suspicion will occasionally cross the mind, however strenuously repelled, “IS THERE NOT A LIE IN MY RIGHT HAND?” And the reluctance often shewn to examine the foundation, and ascertain whether it is really sound, is an indication, not of full confidence in its firmness, but of a lurking suspicion that it will not bear examining.

It is thus that the craving after the mental repose of infallible certainty tends to defeat its own object. Many, however, no doubt, do really enjoy the confident, though groundless, security they boast of. And many, we may expect, will complain of, and censure, and reject, what I have been saying, on the ground that it is a “cheerless” doctrine. And this charge is, to a certain extent, true. To be told to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,” may be less “cheering” than to be told that we have no need for any fear and trembling. When Paul “ceased not for three years to warn every one, night and day, with TEARS,” it was not, certainly, because he judged

this to be the most *cheering* to his people, but because he knew it to be the most for their real good, and the most conformable to truth. It was precisely because he was aware that pains-taking vigilance is less agreeable than confident and boastful security,—it was for this very reason, doubtless,—that he was so assiduous in his warnings, lest any of his people should be,—as so many are, now, and in every age,—led away blindfold by their wishes, and flattered to their ruin by deceitful teachers. It is a common error, and one which men always need to be put on their guard against, to trust to boastful promises, and to lean upon pleasant and cheering hopes, without examining well whether these promises and hopes can rationally be depended on.

But it is the part of true wisdom not to lose, in a vain effort after what Providence has denied us, the advantages which it does place within our reach.

Difficult indeed it is,—or rather impossible,—for us to understand why God has dealt with Man as He has. We may be unable to answer the question, why the Revelation He has bestowed has not been accompanied by the gift of an infallible interpreter on earth, accessible to all men, and precluding all

possibility of doubt as to the meaning of any part of it. It may be hard to explain, why, both in this and in many other most important matters also, Man should have been left to act on his own responsibility, and according to the best of his own fallible judgment; exposed to various dangers, and called on for the exercise of that vigilant care, which, we find, is, in point of fact, often not exercised. We may be unable, in short, to understand *why Earth is not Heaven*;—why EVIL of any kind is permitted to exist.

All this we may be unable to explain; but our inability to explain will not alter facts; and it is for us to make the best use of things as they *are*, instead of wondering or seeking to understand why they were not made otherwise.

That spurious humility above alluded to, the implicit reliance on fallible man, must be discarded; and true humility must take its place. Instead of considering what, according to our notions, God *must* have done, or *ought* to have done, we should inquire what He *has* done; and what use we are allowed and expected to make of it.

If we inquire whether the holy Scriptures did really come from Him, we shall find proof abun-

dantly sufficient to satisfy a candid and humble mind; but not sufficient—strange as this may appear to *us*—to *force* conviction on the uncandid and arrogant. And if we inquire for what purposes the Scriptures were given, and how we are to make use of the gift, they will themselves abundantly teach us. They were evidently given us to enlighten the path of those who will open their eyes to the light, and take heed to their steps; but not of such as love darkness better than light, or view the light through the discoloured glass of their own prejudices and inclinations, or deliver themselves up to be led blindfold by blind guides. They were given, not to supersede, but to exercise, our diligence and watchful care. They abound (as we have seen) in warnings of the danger of perversions and false doctrines. And they bid us Christian ministers “take heed to ourselves and to the flocks committed to our care.” *We* are to study, to the best of our power, to attain to the true meaning of them ourselves, and to impart it to our people, but with a full conviction and confession of our own fallibility.

To complain of this,—to reject or undervalue the revelation God has bestowed, urging that it is no revelation to us, or an insufficient one, because un-

erring certainty is not bestowed also,—because we are required to exercise patient diligence and watchfulness, and candour, and humble self-distrust,—this would be as unreasonable as to disparage and reject the bountiful gift of eye-sight, because men's eyes have sometimes deceived them;—because men have mistaken a picture for the object imitated, or a mirage of the desert for a lake; and have fancied they had the evidence of sight for the sun's motion; and to infer from all this that we ought to blindfold ourselves, and be led henceforth by some guide who pretends to be himself not liable to such deceptions.

The two great volumes,—that of Nature and that of Revelation,—which God has opened before us for our benefit, are in this respect analogous(*a*). Both are, in themselves, exempt from error; but they do not confer complete exemption from all possibility of error on the student of them. As the laws of Nature are in themselves invariable, but yet are sometimes imperfectly known, and sometimes mistaken, by natural philosophers, so the Scriptures are intrinsically infallible, but do not impart infallibility to the student of them. Even by the most learned

(*a*) See Essays on some Dangers to Christian Faith, &c. Essay III. s. 5.

they are in many parts imperfectly understood ; by the “unlearned and unstable” they are liable to be “wrested to their own destruction.”

We have indeed the gracious promise of God’s Holy Spirit to “help our infirmities,” both in respect of our faith and of our conduct ;—to guard us not only against doctrinal error, but also, no less, against sin ;—to further our growth both in *grace*, and also in the *knowledge* of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are sure that, as far as we *are* under the guidance of that Spirit, we cannot but be right both in our belief and our practice(*a*). But how far we *are*, in each instance, thus guided, we must not presume to pronounce with certainty. “It is God that

(*a*) There seems no good ground for inferring from our Lord’s promise to be with his people “always, even unto the end of the world,” that He must have conferred on them, or on some portion of them, *infallibility in judgment*, any more than *impeccability in moral conduct* ; which is, at least, not inferior in importance. The Holy Spirit which He promised should be “given to them that ask it,” is not more needed, or more promised, with a view to correctness of *belief*, than to holiness of *life* : and yet, with respect to this last, most men admit that, “if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us :” why should we not be equally ready to admit that “if we say we have no *error*, we deceive ourselves ?” If we utter with sincerity the words “who can tell how oft he *offendeth* ? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults !” we shall not fail to add, “who can tell how oft he *mistaketh* ?”

worketh in us, both to will and to do" (and, we may add, to judge and believe also) "of his good pleasure;" but this is given by the Apostle as a reason, not for sitting down in careless and self-confident security, but that we should "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." And this same anxious and diligent care must be shewn, among other things, in our study of God's Holy Word(*a*).

"If we say that we have no sin,"—and equally if we say that we have no error,—“we deceive our-

(*a*) Every one, doubtless, is led to what is right both in faith and practice, as far as he is led by the Spirit of Christ;" but how far he *is*, in each instance, under that guidance, he cannot know with certainty till the day of judgment. While continually aiming at perfection, both in belief and practice, the Christian is never authorized to "count himself to have apprehended." Though he may, in point of fact, be right, he must beware of the arrogance of confidently pronouncing and insisting on his own unerring rectitude, unless he shall have received an immediate revelation, and can produce his credentials as an inspired messenger from God.

As for those who do appeal,—in support of a claim to continued, or to renewed inspiration in their respective Churches, or in the leaders they venerate,—to sensibly miraculous proofs, such as gifts of tongues, gifts of healing, &c., these persons, how much soever they may fail in establishing the miraculous *facts*, are at least consistent and intelligible in the conclusions they maintain. The test they appeal to is fair:—"The God that answereth by fire, let him be God."—*Dangers to Christian Faith*, &c., Essay III. s. 4, pp. 146, 148.

selves:" for whatever part of our conduct, and of our opinions, may be in fact perfectly right, we are not authorized confidently to pronounce that it is so. "I judge not," says the Apostle Paul, "mine own self, for I know nothing by myself,"—(i. e. I am not conscious of any failure in my ministerial duties);—"yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord."

Listen(*a*), then, my Christian friends, to this blessed Apostle; learn what he has taught; and attend to the warnings he has given. And let no one persuade you, that by doing this you will be thrown into distressing and incurable doubts and perplexities. Fear not, that by forbearing to forestall the judgment of the last day,—by not presuming to dictate to the Most High, and boldly to pronounce in what way He *must* have imparted a revelation to man,—by renouncing all pretensions to infallibility, whether an immediate and personal, or a derived infallibility,—by owning yourself to be neither impeccable nor infallible (both claims are alike groundless), and by consenting to undergo those trials of vigilance and of patience which God has appointed for

(*a*) See Essays (First Series) on Some Peculiarities of the Christian Religion, pp. 360-262, *note*.

you,—fear not that by this you will forfeit all cheerful hope of final salvation,—all “joy and peace in believing.” The reverse of all this is the reality.

As far as any one is conscious of striving, with humble prayer for divine aid, to do his best, in the way God has directed, he may reasonably hope to be preserved from all fatal errors and deadly sins; and he may trust that any mistakes into which he may have fallen, not through carelessness or perversity, but from mere error of judgment or unavoidable ignorance, will not be imputed to him as sins, but that he will “be accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

Those have, in reality, more to dread, who, professing to renounce all private judgment, have based their whole system of faith on human conjectures as to what a divine revelation *must necessarily* be; and who have shut their eyes to the many plain warnings of our Lord and his Apostles, to “take heed to ourselves.” Paul has declared, that if even “an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel than that which he has delivered, let him be accursed;” and he has left us a written record of his teaching, with which to compare whatever is proposed for our acceptance as Gospel truth; thus, according to our

Lord's precept, judging of the tree by its fruits. Great, then, must be the danger of those who, in fact, *reverse* this precept, and judge of *the fruits by the tree*; by at once concluding, that whatever is taught by the Holy Church, or whatever such and such a person professes to have had revealed to him from Heaven, and to be moved by the Holy Spirit to utter, must be Gospel truth, however at variance with God's written Word.

And as their real danger is great, so they do not always (as I have above observed) succeed even in lulling themselves into complete security. While they crave for more than God has given, and will not be satisfied without that infallible certainty of exemption from error, which would cut off all need of vigilance against error, and of inquiry after truth,—they often (besides building, on a false foundation, a superstructure of error) fail also of that confident repose and peace of mind which they have aimed at. And those, on the other hand, who, in true humility, set themselves to conform to God's directions, will be partakers of His promised blessings. While such Christians as have sought rather for *peace*,—for mental tranquillity and satisfaction,—than for *truth*, will often fail both of truth and peace, those of the

opposite disposition are more likely to attain both, from their gracious Master. He has taught us to “take heed that we be not deceived,” and to “beware of false prophets;” and He has promised us His own peace and heavenly comfort. ‘He has bid us watch and pray; He has taught us, through his blessed Apostle, to “take heed to ourselves,” and to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling;” and He has declared, through the same Apostle, that He “worketh in us;” He has bid us “rejoice in hope;” He has promised that he “will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear;” and He has taught us to look forward to the time when we shall no longer “see as by means of a mirror(*a*), darkly, but face to face;”—when we shall know, “not in part, but even as we are known;”—when faith shall be succeeded by certainty, and hope be ripened into enjoyment. His precepts and His promises go together. His support and comfort are given to those who seek for them in the way He has Himself appointed.

Teach this to your people, you, my Brethren, who are engaged, or are about to engage, in the

(*a*) Δι' ἑσόπτρου ἐν ἀνίγματι.—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Sacred Ministry. Teach them to trust in God, and not transfer their allegiance to uninspired Man. Instruct them to the best of your ability, according to your solemn vow, out of the Scriptures. Refer them to these ; and teach them to search the Scriptures for themselves (like the Bereans of old), “to see whether those things be so” which they shall have heard from you ; and warn them not to expect infallibility in themselves, or in you, or in any uninspired man, but to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is right ;” and caution them against being led away, by bold assertions and arrogant pretensions, into those corruptions of Gospel truth which will always, from time to time, be found arising within the Church. So shall they be enabled to “take up the serpents” they will meet with ; and “if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.”

Take heed, then, my Brethren, to yourselves, and to the flock over which you are appointed overseers ; watch, and remember ever the solemn warnings Paul has given us : and may you be enabled, like him, at the close of your ministry, to stand “pure from the blood of all men.”

APPENDIX.

NOTE A, PAGE 21.

MANY also there are, I am convinced, in this country, and some in the Continental States, by whom the “infallibility of the Church” is understood in the same sense as the constitutional maxim that “the king can do no wrong;” by which every one understands, not that the sovereign is personally exempt from error, but that there is no *superior authority on earth* to which he is responsible, and to which appeal can be made against any exercise of his lawful prerogative; and that to establish any such authority would be to subvert the Constitution for no object; since it would be, after all, only setting up as supreme one fallible man or Body of men instead of another. In like manner, some probably consider it best that there should be, in religious matters, some one supreme authority on earth, which, though not really infallible, should be treated as if it were so; that is, that its decisions should be final and without appeal, and binding on all Christians. This, they conceive, is better than that interminable controversies, arising out of the differences of men’s private judgments, should be suffered to arise, and to continue unchecked. And, no doubt, peace and unanimity might be thus produced, though at the expense of truth,—I mean sincere conviction of truth,—and at the price of transferring to fallible man that devotion which is due to God only, if all Christians throughout the world

would agree to acquiesce in this feigned infallibility. But, as it is, truth and genuine piety are sacrificed for the sake of an universal peace and agreement, which (as is subsequently pointed out) are not attained after all.

NOTE B, PAGE 31.

I am well aware that when the two claims,—that to universality, and that to exemption from dissension and from error,—are brought forward *in conjunction*, and it is undertaken to reconcile them with each other, it is usual to explain one or both of them in a sense different from the obvious and natural meaning of the words, so as to render the two claims compatible. Then it is that we are told that “Catholic” or “Universal” means only the religion of a considerable *majority* of professing Christians, or the religion the most *widely diffused* throughout Christendom: or we are told that the Universal Church means merely that which all professed Christians *ought* to belong to; and that adults of sound mind who have received Christian baptism, and deliberately profess Christianity, are not necessarily members of the Universal Church, or Christians at all.

And we are also told that exemption from dissension and from error belongs to those only who *submit* in all points to the decisions of the rulers of the Catholic Church. And doubtless if all mankind, or any number of men, would but come to a perfect agreement in *any* one religion, be it true or false, they could not but be exempt from religious dissension, and, if not from error, at least from anything that they themselves would account an error.

But surely this is to “keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope.” It is not in any such sense that the pretensions I have been speaking of are usually

put forth, and naturally understood, when *taken separately*. And it is not under any such explanations as the above, that those pretensions are found so alluring and so satisfactory as, to a great number of persons, they are; but in the natural and ordinary sense of the words. The expression "Catholic," or "Universal," Church is naturally understood to denote that which comprehends all Christians. And by the word Christians is understood those who acknowledge and professedly embrace the religion founded by Jesus Christ. And those who designate any of these as Heretics are so far from denying them the title of Christians (though unsound and perverted Christians), that they imply it; since Pagans or avowed Atheists are never reckoned Heretics.

I am not, be it observed, defending this use of the word "Christian" as the most *advisable* to be adopted, if we were framing a new language. It might, we will suppose, have been advisable so to define the term that no two Christian Sects or Churches should apply it to the same persons. I am simply stating a *fact* as to the actual sense conveyed by the word in our *existing language*. And that such is the sense conveyed by it is as much a fact as that we actually call the ninth month of the year September, and the tenth October; though if we were remodelling our language, the impropriety of such names would be obvious.

And again, exemption from dissension and from error naturally conveys the idea, not of these evils being *condemned* by certain Authorities when they arise, but of their never arising at all.

And it is in these obvious and natural senses of the words that the above pretensions are in general,—when taken separately,—put forth with boastful confidence, and prove so attractive and so consolatory to the minds of many as to be

at once admitted without any close scrutiny as to how far they are well-founded.

But when the two claims are brought into juxta-position, and it is inquired how far they are *compatible*, then they are explained away in the manner above alluded to. The promise is made in one sense, and kept in the other.

I will take the liberty of subjoining an extract relating to this point from the Appendix to the second Essay on the Kingdom of Christ.

“ I have seen reproaches full of scornful exultation cast on Protestants for having recourse, when treating of the subject of Church-government, to reasonings drawn from general views of Human Nature, and to illustrations from secular affairs: and for calculating what are likely to be the decisions of a Synod so and so constituted, without advert- ing to the promises of divine presence and protection to the Church, and without expressing confidence of providential interpositions to secure it from discord, error, and other evils.

“ This kind of language has, at the first glance, a plausible air; and is well calculated,—one cannot but think, designed,—to impose on pious and well-intentioned but ignorant, weak, and unreflecting minds among the multitude. But a sober examination will shew it to be either wholly irrelevant to the matter in hand, or else a mere groundless pretence.

“ It is indeed true that the Lord has promised to be with his People ‘ even unto the end of the world,’ and that ‘ the Gates of Hell’ (*i. e.* death) ‘ shall not prevail against his Church ;’ that is, that Christianity shall never become extinct. And his ‘ Spirit which helpeth our infirmities’ will doubtless be granted to such as sincerely exert themselves in his cause: though not necessarily so as to crown those exertions with such complete success, as, we know, was not

granted to the Apostles themselves. Our efforts, however, in that cause, whether He in his unsearchable wisdom shall see fit to make them a greater or a less benefit to others, will doubtless, as far as regards ourselves, be accepted by Him. And a pious confidence in whatever God has really promised, Protestants do not fail to inculcate on suitable occasions.

“ But when the question is as to the probable results of such and such a procedure in a Synod, and as to the measures likely to be adopted by a Government so and so constituted, it would manifestly be irrelevant to dwell on those general promises of the divine blessing. If there were a question what means should be used to protect a certain district from hurtful inundations, no one would think of cutting short the discussion by a reference to the promise made to Noah, that the whole Earth should never again be laid waste by a deluge. It is evident, therefore, that the reproaches I have alluded to must be understood as having reference to (that which alone is pertinent to the present question) confidence in a promise of supernatural interference to secure the Church for ever from strife, schism, and corruption.

“ And certainly if we *had* received any such promise, all apprehensions, all calculations of probabilities,—all reasonings from the analogy of other human transactions, would be superseded; and we should have only to ‘stand still and see the salvation of God.’

“ But every one, except the grossly ignorant and unthinking, must be well aware that no such promise has ever been *fulfilled*, and consequently (if the Scriptures are to be taken as a record of divine truth) that none such was ever *made*.

“ We find the Apostle Paul declaring that ‘there must needs be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest;’ we find him labouring to repress the irregularities and party spirit which even in his own time had crept into

the Church of Corinth; and warning the Elders of Ephesus and Miletus to ‘take heed, because after his departure grievous wolves would enter into the fold.’ Corruptions in doctrine, disorders, dissension, and insubordination, are evils of which he is continually giving notice to his People as what they must be prepared to encounter.

“ And when we look to the ecclesiastical history of subsequent Ages—exhibiting the sad spectacle of contests almost equally dividing the Church, between the Arians, for instance, and the Athanasians, on points of doctrine, and between the Donatists and their opponents, on a question of ecclesiastical Polity,—besides the mutual anathemas of the Eastern and Western Churches, and besides all the cabals, and intrigues, and secular motives, and evil passions, which have notoriously found their way into Councils, and Conclaves, and ecclesiastical Courts—when we contemplate all this, we see but too well what reason the Apostle had for his warnings.

“ But there is no need in the present case to resort to ancient history. The very existence of *Protestants* (to say nothing of the Greek Church) is sufficient to nullify, in respect of the Church of Rome at least, the notion of an exemption from error and from schism being promised to *that*, as to the Universal or Catholic Church. For the Church of Rome claims all professing Christians as properly belonging to it; considering Protestants as children, though disobedient children;—subjects, though revolted subjects. The very rise, therefore, and continued existence, of Protestantism, proves the non-existence in the Catholic Church (if the Church of Rome be supposed such) of any immunity from heresy and schism. And if it be attempted to avoid this conclusion by allowing that Protestants and members of the Greek Church are *not* to be regarded as in any way

belonging to the Church of Rome, then, the pretensions of that Church to be *the Catholic* (*i. e.* Universal) Church, must be given up.

“ Whatever plausibility therefore there may appear at first sight in the pretensions, *separately* taken, of that Church, on the one hand to perfect purity of doctrine, and unity, and on the other hand to Universality, it is evident that both *conjointly* cannot be maintained with even any show of reason. Either the one or the other must be abandoned(*a*). If Protestants, and members of the Greek, the Armenian, and other Churches, do *not* belong to the Romish Church, it cannot be *Universal*; if (which is what its advocates actually maintain) all Christians do belong to it, then, it manifestly is not exempt from *divisions*, and contrariety of doctrine. It is in vain (as far as the present question is concerned) to urge that the doctrine and procedure of Protestants, &c., are *condemned* by the authorities of the Church of Rome, and by all its *sound* members. For an *exemption* from a certain evil must consist, not, in its being *censured* when it arises, but in its *not arising* at all. Indeed it would be very easy,—and also quite nugatory,—for any Church whatever to set up the boast that its doctrines are received by all,—except those who dissent from them; and that all submit to its authority,—except those who refuse submission.

“ The extraordinary Providence therefore which is boasted of as securing the true Church from division and from error, and which Protestants are reproached with not trusting to or claiming, has evidently no existence in the very Church to which those who utter the reproach belong. And one can hardly doubt that they must themselves be aware of this;

(*a*) They are evidently on opposite sides of the Thaumatrope. See Logic, B. iii. s. 11.

and that when they speak, in a tone of exulting confidence, of the miraculous exemption of their Church from the inroads of false doctrine and dissension, they are only seeking to quiet the minds of the unthinking Vulgar with a delusive consolation.

“How far this kind of language may work an opposite effect on the minds of the more educated Classes,—how far the great prevalence of infidelity among those Classes on the Continent may be accounted for by their continually hearing (from those who, they will conclude, ought to know what their own Scriptures say) of *promises* having been made to the Church which, it is evident, as a matter of experience, have *not* been fulfilled, is an inquiry into which I will not now enter. My own conviction is that every kind of pious fraud is as much at variance, ultimately, with sound policy, as it is with Christian principle.”

NOTE C, PAGE 31.

It is worth remarking, that a very great additional danger of infidelity exists in all those countries in which it is an established principle that the profession of the religion which the government sanctions, may, and should be enforced by *coercive* means, and that it is the right and duty of the civil magistrate to prohibit and forcibly repress all departure from it. I do not doubt indeed that many persons are sincere believers in Christianity, who yet maintain this principle; but the principle itself,—besides being wholly at variance with the spirit of Christianity,—acts also as a kind of specific poison to sincere belief. Like a pestilential atmosphere, it makes gradual and inperceptible advances in debilitating the system, and tainting the inmost springs of life, more or less speedily according to the constitution of each

individual; and carries off its victims one by one, without external blow, by a secret internal decay.

One mode in which this cause operates is, by destroying the support which each man's conviction ordinarily derives, and may fairly and reasonably derive, from that of his neighbours. For, whatever any one is *compelled* to profess, we cannot rationally feel sure that he does not inwardly disbelieve; since we know that if he does disbelieve it he dares not openly say so.

But it is in another way that the principle in question produces its most deleterious effects. In proportion as men are accustomed to regard it as right that outward profession should be enforced, they will come to consider this *profession* as everything, and inward belief,—which *cannot* be enforced,—as insignificant. *Conformity* will be regarded as the great object, and *truth* as a matter we need not be concerned about.

“The highest truth,” says Dr. Arnold, “if professed by one who believes it not in his heart, is, to him, a lie, and he sins greatly by professing it. Let us try as much as we will to convince our neighbours; but let us beware of influencing their conduct when we fail in influencing their convictions. He who bribes or frightens his neighbour into doing an act which no good man would do for reward, or from fear, is tempting his neighbour to sin; he is assisting to lower and to harden his conscience,—to make him act for the favour and from the fear of man, instead of for the favour and from the fear of God; and if this be a sin in him, it is a double sin in us to tempt him to do it.” And any one whose conscience has been thus lowered,—who has been so long habituated to this sin as to cease to consider it as a sin,—will have cast aside all thoughts of sincerity in religious profession, either in himself or in others; and will regard it as even a duty

(like the ancient heathen philosophers) to conform to the religion of his country for the sake of the public good.

It is mere trifling and evasion to pretend (as some have done) to qualify the principle, by saying that the Government is to enforce a *true* religion, and not any other; since, of course, each Government will decide and proclaim that to be the true one which it patronizes; and from its decisions there is no appeal. If it has a *right*, then, to make and enforce these decrees,—if it be, as some express it, the duty of a Government to *provide* a true religion for the subjects, in the sense of deciding what religion they shall *be obliged*, under a penalty, to adhere to,—and if it be the *duty* of the subjects, as well as their interest, to acquiesce (as it must be if Government *have* this right, since *right* and *duty* imply each other),—then, since different, and even opposite religions may be, and in fact are, in different countries, thus enforced, all of which cannot be true, but all of which, each in its own country, men are *bound* to profess, a complete disconnexion is thus effected between religious profession and truth. For it is utterly impossible, on the above principles, that there can be any *one* true religion revealed from heaven which it is the duty of every individual to adopt. All must be mere creatures of human legislation for the purposes of state policy.

And this, I suppose, was the meaning of a member of the Legislature, of some celebrity, who is reported to have said that he believed all religions to be true, and all equally true. That they could, all and each, be really from Heaven, their palpable discrepancy renders clearly impossible; and, therefore, if they are all on a level, it must follow that none of them is a real revelation. “All equally true” must have meant “all equally false.” But all,—I suppose he meant,—are alike suited to keep the vulgar in salutary awe, and to

gratify a certain craving in their minds after some superhuman object of veneration.

This seems to be just that description of infidelity which the principle I have been speaking of,—that of compulsory conformity,—often actually produces, and always tends to generate and to foster. See *Essays on the Difficulties of St. Paul's Writings, &c.*, Appendix, note E.

THE END.

FOUR SERMONS

BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

BEING

THE ADDITIONS TO THE SECOND EDITION

OF

SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

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SERMONS.

S E R M O N I * .

PHILIPPIANS I. 4, 5.

Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.

THAT the apostle Paul considered it to be the design of his Master that a sufficient maintenance should be provided for the ministers of the gospel,—that he intended Christians to feel themselves strictly bound to contribute, when needful, to this object,—and that he warmly encouraged a disposition to come forward liberally with such contributions—all this is what no one even moderately versed in this apostle's writings can be ignorant of. But it would not

* Preached before the Additional Curates' Fund Society for Ireland, on Tuesday, the 5th of April, 1842, and published at the request of the Society.

appear at first sight to the English reader, that the particular passage now before us has any relation to that subject. The expression "your fellowship in the gospel," would naturally be understood, and I suppose must have been meant to be understood, as signifying the Philippians' having received the faith and become members of Christ's mystical body, "the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." But on looking at the original, it will be seen, that the apostle's words cannot possibly bear that meaning. The real sense of the words undoubtedly is, not "your fellowship in the gospel," but "your contribution towards the gospel, from the first day until now"—this liberality in providing for the maintenance of the gospel-ministers being a virtue in which these Philippians seem to have been, both at first and ever after, especially eminent. It may be that they had been enabled to lend assistance in other ways also: that they had aided in the work of diffusing the gospel, or had afforded advice, encouragement, and consolation to its preachers, and had borne effectual testimony in their favour: but *contribution* to-

wards the gospel, of some kind or other, is plainly what the apostle is speaking of—and *pecuniary* contribution is the only kind distinctly specified in this epistle.

The word indeed which is translated “fellowship” (*κοινωνια*), does originally, and in the greater number of the places where it occurs, bear that signification: but the words which follow it in this passage plainly shew that it cannot here be used in that sense, but in another, which it also very often bears, that of “contribution;” that is, imparting—communicating—making another a *sharer* or *fellow-partaker* of what belongs to us¹.

The same word and others of the same derivation, are in various passages used in this sense, and are so rendered in our version. For instance, in this very epistle, one of the objects of the apostle in writing it was, to acknowledge the receipt of a supply which the Philip-

* *Κοινωνια εις το ευαγγελιον* could not possibly have been used to express “fellowship in the gospel;” the preposition used being one that signifies not ‘in’ but ‘to,’ ‘into’ or ‘towards:’ so that the passage relates, as I have said, to “contribution towards the support of Paul and his fellow-labourers.”

prians had just sent. (Ch. iv.) “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again—ye have well done that ye did *communicate* with my affliction:” [here the word in the original is akin to that in the text which I have rendered “contribution.”] “Ye know also that in the beginning of the gospel no church *communicated* with me, [the same word in the original,] as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only: for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.” This is evidently what he was alluding to in the opening of the epistle; “your contribution towards the gospel *from the first day* until now:” This he mentions as the ground of the *joy* which he describes himself as feeling on their behalf, viz. their kind remembrance of him: for the translation of a subsequent verse, as given in the *margin*, and not in the text, is evidently the right one; as it is plainly *their* having *him* in their heart, that he is dwelling on. The proper reading of the passage is, “even as it is meet for me to have this feeling towards all of you, on account of your having me in your heart.”

And he concludes the epistle by adverting again to their late supply ; “ having received of Epaphroditus those things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.”

Again, the very word (*κοινωνία*) which I have been noticing in the text, is translated in 2 Cor. ix. 13, “ your *liberal distribution* unto them :” And again, in the epistle to the Romans* it is rendered “ to make a certain *contribution* for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.”

And other passages to the same effect might be adduced, if there were any need.

Our authorized version is in general so faithful, that I have thought it the more desirable to notice the above mistranslation ; especially as it is not noticed in the Commentaries which are in the hands of most readers. The error seems to have originated in the Latin version ; with which our translators were so familiar as to have occasionally overlooked some of the (very few) errors it contains.

* Rom. xv. 26. and xii. 13. “ *distributing* to the necessities of the saints,” is a translation of the corresponding word.

From the passages I have referred to, as well as from many other portions of the apostle Paul's epistles, it is sufficiently evident that he considered a Christian Ministry as entitled, of right, to receive from the people such supply of their temporal wants as might be needful. And herein he is conforming to the declaration of our Lord himself, on the occasion of his sending out the seventy, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire:" thus indicating, that the hospitality offered them they were to receive not as mere ordinary hospitality, or as a charitable bounty bestowed on the destitute, but as an equitable debt due for their services. And his sanction of their receiving this kind of payment is the more remarkable, and must have been the more striking to the early disciples, from the experimental knowledge they had of their Master's power to provide supernaturally for his own wants and for theirs. There were two, and only two, extraordinary occasions on which He thought fit miraculously to feed a multitude with a few loaves. And it is remarkable, that on each of those occasions He most emphatically evinced, and called attention to,

his design of not ordinarily repeating the miracle, by his charge to "gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost."

Whatever other purposes were answered by his giving this injunction and by the result of it, this at least was plain, that He did not intend to provide a *daily* miraculous supply; else, the gathering up of the fragments would have been as unsuitable as the laying by of manna for the morrow, by the Israelites in the wilderness.

And as for the succeeding period, that in which inspiration was to cease, as Christian Ministers would then be called on to acquire by laborious study, some of that knowledge with which the apostles were gifted supernaturally, it is plain that it would have been even less fitting for the uninspired than for the inspired ministers, to have been wholly dependent for subsistence on secular labour, such as that by which, in part and occasionally, Paul supported himself.

We may further collect from this apostle's writings, as well as from other parts of Scripture, that the supposed community of goods which most persons believe to have existed in

the infant Church at Jerusalem, and the supposed obligation on all Christians to sell all that they had and give to the poor, must, if they ever existed at all, have been very soon superseded. But I have used the word "supposed," because the notions I have alluded to seem to me to have been taken up without any sufficient foundation.

It seems much more likely that the community of goods alluded to, existed among those only who were *engaged in the ministry* *.

Another conclusion which we may draw from the writings of this apostle, is, the danger which he conceived likely to arise from the maintenance of a Christian Minister by the voluntary contributions of his congregation. He seems to have been so strongly impressed with the importance of a minister's being exempt from all temptation of being influenced by the hope of pleasing, or the fear of offending, those among whom he exercises his ministry,—from all risk of being unduly controlled by them, or of incurring even the suspicion of such control,—that, at Corinth, and indeed

* See Note A. at the end.

throughout the whole province—"the regions of Achaia"—he found it necessary to come to the resolution of never receiving, himself, any pecuniary assistance whatever from the people. It was in those regions, it seems, especially, that he was chiefly exposed to "perils among false brethren;"—men who disputed his apostleship—who undervalued his person—who contended against his authority, and opposed his doctrine. And in order to bear up as well as possible against these trials, and to assert effectually his own just claims, as far as was required for the benefit of his converts, he found it necessary to preclude at once all suspicion of interested views, by contrasting as much as possible his own self-denying conduct with the covetousness of those opposed to him, and altogether refusing the remuneration that was fairly due to him. That it *was* due he steadily maintained; 1 Cor. ix. 1—7, and 11—15.—"Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the

Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this;—have we not power to eat and to drink? have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have we not power to forbear working? Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?” * * * *

* * * *

“ If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. But I have used none of these things: neither have

I written these things that it should be so done unto me : for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void."

But though protesting against an abandonment of his right, and protesting also against being supposed wanting in love towards the Corinthians, he persisted that nothing should deprive him of this boast, that in the regions of Achaia he had preached the gospel gratuitously. He "robbed" he tells them "other churches, taking wages of them"—i. e. receiving more than a proportionate contribution, from the churches of Macedonia, rather than be a burden to the Corinthians.

It was only it seems, the most docile, humble, single-minded and unsuspicious of his converts, and those most exempt from the machinations of "evil workers," seeking to raise parties among them, that he would so far *trust*, as to *admit* them as contributors to his support.

And one could easily understand even from conjecture, had we no experience of modern times to instruct us, how judicious was the course the apostle followed. One might anticipate even from a knowledge of human nature,

the danger to which a minister must be exposed who is supported by the voluntary contributions of the very people among whom he is officiating :—the danger that (as Paley has expressed it in his homely language,) preaching should be regarded as a mode of begging ;—the danger that some of his congregation should think themselves authorized to dictate to him what he should teach, and how ; that the most bountiful contributors should think their opinion entitled to more weight,—their concerns to more attention,—than those of the poorer or more sparing of the members ;—the danger that his zealous exertions and his conciliating kindness, even when springing from the purest source, should be ascribed to interested motives ; and that even when perfectly free from all bias—all desire to flatter his audience and accommodate his doctrines to their inclination, he should yet be unable to gain full credit for such uncompromising sincerity.

And it is evident that all evils of this class are likely to arise in at least as great a degree in these days, as in those of the apostles and other *inspired* teachers.

As for the supposed counter-balancing advantage, the incitements to exertion and vigilance, and to carefulness in respect of conduct, when a minister is dependent for his maintenance on the voluntary payments of his congregation, it is my decided and deliberate conviction, that when such dependence does operate at all, it operates much more for evil than for good. I do not believe there is a single active and useful minister in existence, supported on what is called "the voluntary system," who would not have been at least as useful if supported by an endowment, or from a common fund. And whenever a minister is found, who, enjoying this latter kind of support, is inactive or negligent, he must, I am convinced, be of such a character, that inactive and negligent must be the *best* thing *he* would ever be. In the profession of the law indeed,—in medicine—in short, in almost all secular professions,—the stimulus afforded by the hope of secular advantage, operates, on the whole, beneficially to the public, in respect of the objects of those professions. In the ministerial office (as I had occasion to observe in a lecture delivered

not long ago in this City *,) from the very different character of the objects proposed, the reverse is what on the whole may be expected.

The occasion does not require me, nor would its limits permit me, to discuss fully the question between the two modes of supporting Christian ministers; by the voluntary payments to each from the members of his own particular congregation, or, on the other hand, by a stipend from some fund independent of the congregation, and arising either from an endowment, or from a common stock supplied by general contributions. But it is worth remarking by the way, that it is not very uncommon to find the advocates for the first of these modes, supporting their own views by a most extraordinary misapplication of language: they speak sometimes of their objection to a "hired ministry;" applying that term to such as are maintained by endowments, as distinguished from such as are paid by their respective congregations. Now certainly these last ought not indeed to be exposed to any reproach on

* Since published, by the Dublin "Law-Institute," and afterwards in the "Elements of Rhetoric."

account of a mode of support expressly sanctioned by our Lord; (and which, it should be observed, He has expressly designated by the term *hire*,) but they ought to remember that the reproach, if there were any, would apply to themselves, and to themselves only; and that those whom they stigmatize as *hired* ministers, are precisely the only ones who are *not* hired.

From the peculiar dangers attendant on the payment of each minister by his own congregation, we may be in a great degree exempt, either by endowments, or by voluntary contributions thrown together into a common stock, and distributed "to all (iii. Acts,) as every one has need."

I know not whether it would be *desirable* that the endowments of a Church should be completely sufficient for the support of all its ministers, without any call on the liberality of its members. Certain it is, that to cultivate a habit of liberality—"to be ready to give and glad to distribute," is a considerable portion of the moral discipline appointed for Christians in this present life. If all men could be so pro-

vided for that there should be no occasion for any such thing as *giving*,—if, for instance, it were possible to realize the Utopian schemes with which of late years the public have been amused, of communities without private property—one great branch of Christian virtue would remain dormant. We know that such puerile dreams never can be realized; that “the poor will never cease out of the land:” and we are bound joyfully to embrace the opportunity of exercising that Christian virtue which the arrangements of Providence call for. But besides the moral advantage, (I mean the advantage to the *giver*,) derived from the exercise of beneficence to the *distressed poor*, there is an additional, and perhaps a still greater, moral advantage in liberality towards any *religious* object. Our heart is apt to go along with our treasure. The persons—the institutions—the objects—on which our bounty has been bestowed, become endeared to us; and as a kindly feeling is generated and kept up toward the distressed poor whom our liberality has relieved, so, an increased attachment to the Church, and an increased value for gospel-truth,

and zeal for its diffusion, are likely to be produced by the habit of coming forward to aid the Church-revenues — by “contribution towards the gospel.” Even comparatively insignificant objects become interesting to any one who has but been brought to *do* something, and to *give* something, towards them: and surely there is no object in respect of which it is so desirable to cultivate such feelings.

But be this as it may; whether it be on the whole a good or an evil that there should be such endowments for the maintenance of the clergy, and other church-purposes, as to leave no need for the exercise of private liberality, is a question we need not enter upon; because, whether desirable or not, we well know that such is not the actual state of things. We know that there are many places in this Country much needing the labours of Christian ministers, in some of which there are very scanty funds, in others none at all, for their support. And even if the total of all the church-endowments in the Country were sufficient (which is far enough from being the fact,) for the suitable support of the total number of ministers required, still

our object could not be accomplished, unless these were (which we know to be practically impossible,) thrown together into a common stock and re-distributed.

Some persons are accustomed to talk of the wealth of the church—the endowments of the church—forgetting that the church as a Body has hardly any property at all; and none that is available for the support of clergymen. The endowments are those of each *parish*, separately; and supposing the *average* of these to be far beyond what it is, the call for private liberality to supply deficiencies where they exist, would not necessarily be even diminished. If any one were to deny the claim of the distressed poor to charitable assistance, on the ground that they were individual members of a wealthy *nation*, and that the total funds of the whole nation were sufficient for the comfortable maintenance of the total population, he would be advancing nothing more unreasonable than if he were to apply the same kind of calculation in the present case.

But if by our church, be meant, *all the members* of it, both clergy and people, and if by the

property of the church, any one means all that is possessed by all its members, then I do believe, that the revenues of the church are amply sufficient for the support of a sufficient number of ministers. All that is requisite is, liberality and Christian zeal in those who have the means, and in all, proportionably to their means, so as to give full efficiency to a Society such as ours—to keep copiously filled those channels which it provides.

It cannot but be gratifying to every well-wisher to our church, that such a Society has been called into existence, to supply a great and important deficiency; a deficiency long since acknowledged and notorious in many places, and in some, continually increasing; and a deficiency (I must add,) likely to cause a scandal and bring disgrace on the church as a community. For besides the direct evils resulting from the want of a suitable provision for a Christian minister where needed, there are other indirect evils also. If an impression is produced on the mind of any one, that those professed members of our church, who can afford money for other purposes, while they

suffer such a deficiency to remain unremedied, as far as relates to any contribution on their part,—if the impression, I say, is produced, that these persons do not really believe the religion they profess, or do not regard it as a matter of any importance that the people should partake of its ordinances, and receive instruction in it; and that it is only from political feelings that they are attached to the Established Church; or, perhaps, that they prefer it to any other religious communion, precisely because it has endowments, and that therefore they may continue members of it without being absolutely required to make any such pecuniary contributions as they would be unable to escape if they were professed members of some dissenting Body;—if, I say, in any case, impressions of this kind are created, and a grievous scandal to our religion is thus produced, this is a very important incidental and indirect evil, superadded to the immediate evil of an insufficient supply of ministers.

I have adverted to these considerations, because much as we may rejoice that the Society has received the degree of support it has, we

can by no means feel satisfied, unless it be much more extensively and amply supported;—unless in short, it be made fully adequate to supply the wants for which it was designed.

For certainly the professed members of our church not only are well *able* to do this, if they have but the requisite good will, but even if they had amply provided for the proposed object, they would still be much less heavily burdened than other bodies of Christians, who are found cheerfully coming forward to bear *all* the expences of maintaining their own clergy.

I hope indeed that most of those who hear me, have been actuated by higher and purer motives than the dread of a reproach to our Church, or a jealousy of being outdone either by Christians of other denominations or by persons pursuing some political object. I trust you are influenced by feelings which would operate equally, if there were no religious community in the world but our own;—by love towards our Divine Master, and for his sake, towards our brethren. But if there be any one who is not roused to exertion either by this

feeling, or yet again, by this in conjunction with that of emulation, and with a dread of bringing a scandal on our Church, his apathy is surely a doubly aggravated fault.

Let us not then relax our endeavours to make known and to recommend, as extensively as possible, the object of this Society, and to exhort all who *profess* a veneration and love for our Church, not to satisfy themselves with mere professions ;—not to “love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth :” and let us unite our prayers for the Divine blessing in our efforts ; “being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work” in the members of our Church, “will perform the same even unto the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

NOTE A. TO PAGE 10.

The Apostles, and those others who in the strictest sense “followed Jesus,” had necessarily “left all” in order to do so. Their immediate attendance on his person, usually, and their occasional travels as missionaries sent by Him through the towns and villages, precluded them from taking care of any property, or following any trade. They appear to have thrown together all they had, including the contributions of wealthy and liberal believers*, into a common stock—“the bag,” of which Judas was the keeper,—out of which they subsisted, and also gave alms to the indigent.

The young man, whose “great possessions” proved a snare to him, was invited to join this society, and “come and follow” Jesus; and was, of course, required to conform to the rule of the society, by “selling all that he had.” That the precept was not designed for Christians generally, but only for those whose proper business and *profession* was attendance on the person of Jesus, and going about as missionary-preachers, seems almost too plain to need proof. If *all* men were to attempt to “sell all that they have,” there could be none to buy; and if none were to be occupied in the ordinary pursuits of industry, all would perish for want of food and clothing: but there is certainly some degree of plausibility in the erroneous notion, that though this is not required of Christians *generally*, there is a *high degree* of merit in thus divesting one’s self of property; and that he who “would be perfect” should take this course. And it is commonly supposed,—certainly not without some show of reason,—that the renunciation of private property, and the system of community of goods, was, for a time

* Luke viii. 3.

at least, adopted by the *whole* of the infant Church at Jerusalem. That the system, if ever so adopted, was soon discontinued, is perfectly evident. Those "who were rich in this world," were exhorted to be "ready to give, and glad to distribute;" which implies both that there were rich men in the Churches, and that they were not required to sell all that they had, and cease to possess property; which would have left them, for the future, nothing to give. And the same may be learned from all that we read about the collections made in Greece for the poor Christians of Judea; and from many other circumstances in the sacred history.

But it will appear on attentive examination, that even in the infancy of the Church at Jerusalem, the community of goods was in reality confined to *those engaged in the ministry*; including the female Catechists, or Deaconesses, who were called "Widows." Just at first, this description may have included *all* the believers; that is, those who were the first to embrace the Gospel may *all* have been employed in some department of the ministry. But that the community of goods was not a regulation extending to members even of that early Church, simply as members, is plain, even from the very words of Peter to Ananias; whom he reminds that the land, and the money it was sold for, were at his own disposal. If a renunciation of his property had been the condition of his becoming a *Christian*, we can hardly suppose Peter would have so expressed himself, and have made this circumstance an aggravation of his sin in "*lying* to the Holy Ghost." But the whole transaction becomes intelligible, if we suppose,—what I have no doubt is the correct supposition that Ananias and his wife offered themselves for the *ministry* (for which, the renunciation of private property *was* at that time a condition), and then sought a share of the maintenance supplied by the common stock, while they fraudulently retained private property besides.

SERMON II.

THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF EDUCATING THE POOR*.

MATTHEW XXV. 40.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

THIS passage is one out of the very many earnest exhortations to beneficence which occur in the discourses of our Lord and of his Apostles. After alluding to the most common temporal wants and afflictions to which man is liable—hunger and nakedness, sickness and imprisonment—He represents himself as declaring at the day of judgment that He considers the poor and the distressed as his brethren, and that He regards the kind offices done to them in

* Preached in St. Patrick's Cathedral, 24th November, 1844, in behalf of the National School of Clondalkin, and published, with the Author's permission, by the Patrons of the School.

need as done to Himself, and Himself as neglected by those who neglect the relief of their fellow-creatures. And in other places He contrasts the sort of beneficence taught by Himself, with the narrow and partial sort of kindness inculcated by other teachers, whose maxim was, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy;” and who restricted their good offices to those from whom they hoped for a return, or to their personal friends, or men of their own nation, or sect, or party; while He, on the contrary, tells his disciples to “love their enemies,” to “do good, hoping for nothing again,” and to be “kind to the unthankful and the evil:” and when asked what He means by a “*neighbour*,” selects, as an example, an *alien* and a *heretic*—one of that abhorred nation, the Samaritans, whom we find surprised at his even asking one of them for a draught of water: “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?”

And the Apostles, as might be expected, we find imitating their Blessed Master in their earnest inculcations of the duties of beneficence.

All this is what we should naturally look for in the teachers of a pure and exalted morality. But there is this remarkable circumstance connected with such teaching, when coming from one possessed of unlimited miraculous powers, that He evidently shows his principal design to be the moral discipline and improvement of character of the *givers*—the persons who were to *exercise* that beneficence which He teaches. On two extraordinary occasions, and only on those, He miraculously multiplied food, so as to feed great multitudes with a few loaves; and on each of those occasions He directs “the fragments to be gathered up” and saved, as if on purpose to show that He did not design the habitual *repetition* of such a miracle, either for the ordinary support of his own disciples, or for the relief of the poor. And it is evident from the Gospel-narrative, that He was in the habit of directing that the poor should usually be relieved out of that common stock from which He and his immediate followers were maintained.

After his departure, again, He left his Apostles unprovided with any miraculous supplies

for their ordinary wants, and dependent on the contributions of their brother-Christians. These, it seems, were to be thus exercised in the practice of that liberality which was designed to form an essential part of the Christian character, and were thus to obtain a greater benefit than the recipients of their liberality; according to his own saying, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." And to this design of our Lord's, we find the Apostle Paul alluding, when he is acknowledging the liberality to himself of his converts the Philippians. "It is not," says he, "that I desire the gift, but I desire the fruit that may abound on *your* account*."

Our Lord's proceeding, in this respect, we may perceive to be in exact accordance with that general law of Divine Providence, which makes man universally dependent for almost every kind of advantage on his fellow-men. The human race would perish, but for the care bestowed in infancy and childhood for a far

* "*The* gift," not, as in our version, "*a* gift," is the exact rendering of the original.

longer portion of time than is requisite for any other animal. And all the arts of life, which to man much more than supply the place of those instincts with which the lower animals are far more liberally endowed, are not left to be devised by each individual for himself, but are communicated from man to man. In all things that concern this present world, we are continually indebted, for almost everything we possess and enjoy, to each other's services.

And this rule of Divine Providence is far from being confined to the case of man's bodily and temporal wants, but extends also to the cultivation of the understanding, and to the formation of the mind and religious character. As men are dependent on each other's services for the maintenance, and care, and support which are requisite for their animal life, so are they also instructed and trained by each other in every art and science, and in the knowledge of their duties to God and to their neighbours.

Without presuming to explain why God has thought fit that in so many even of the most important points the welfare of our fellow-

creatures has been thus intrusted to us, and left to depend in great measure on our care, this at least we can clearly see, that we are thus called on by a sense of most awful responsibility to “love, not in word, but in deed”—to bring our benevolent principles into practice, and to *cultivate* and cherish kindly feelings by that habitual and active *exercise* without which they would soon languish and fade away.

As for the modes in which a benevolent character may manifest itself—the different ways of showing kindness and doing good, to our neighbour, we cannot doubt that our Lord meant to include *all* of them, and not to restrict what He said to the particular cases He alludes to, of hunger, nakedness, imprisonment, and sickness. And, to different persons, different kinds of opportunities are offered, of benefiting a fellow-creature. Some opportunity almost every one may find, if he seek for it in earnest. And to many, there are several different channels open, through which their beneficence may flow, if the stream itself of that beneficence be not wanting.

To me it has always appeared, that to aid

in giving useful *education* to the poor is one of the best channels into which our beneficence can be directed; because, both a *greater amount* of good, and also a more *permanent* good, is thus effected, than could be effected in most other ways at the same cost. Without depreciating the duty of relieving the bodily wants of our poorer brethren, it does seem to me one of the most important of our duties, to feed the hungry and thirsty *mind*—to relieve those whose sickness consists of intellectual and moral disease or infirmity—to clothe those whose nakedness is mental, with whatever sound principles and useful knowledge we can supply to them, and to release them from the bondage of gross ignorance and barbarism, giving free play to the faculties with which man is endowed by his Maker. This is a kind of good, we should remember, which can be accomplished to a greater extent than many others which we are bound to aim at. The distresses of penury and sickness we can relieve in this or that *particular instance*, and we are bound to do so according to our opportunities; but these are evils which can never, with all our efforts,

be completely *abolished* in this world. But gross barbarian and brutish ignorance *may*, if all men would but exert themselves as they ought. A whole nation in which indigence and sickness should be unknown, is what evidently could never exist, though benevolent and judicious exertions would greatly mitigate those evils; but the savage ignorance of the totally uneducated is an evil which might be *wholly* eradicated; and it is a disgrace to a civilized and Christian nation that *any* of our countrymen should be left in such a state.

Moreover, in what relates to the relief of the bodily wants of the indigent, we always reckon *that* as the most judicious and effectual kind of help, which puts a man in the way of helping *himself*. If we feed a poor family for a week or a month, and then leave them as we found them, we do but little good: whereas if we can place them in a situation to maintain themselves, the benefit is lasting. Now it is well known, that, as a general rule, the accompaniments of gross ignorance are, idleness, careless improvidence, and intemperance; and that the fruits of good education—so far as it is

good—are in the same degree, generally, a habit of prudent forethought, steady industry, frugality, and temperance. In supplying education, therefore, to the poor, we put them in the way of permanently helping themselves, even in respect of their other wants, and of avoiding or mitigating many of the evils to which their condition is liable.

Again, the benefit of education extends very far beyond the immediate objects of it. A person left in a state of moral and intellectual darkness—in the condition of a mere animal—is not only himself a miserably degraded being, but is dangerous and noxious to those around him. And any one (in whatever station of life) who is, to any degree, well-educated, is, so far as he is well-educated, a blessing not only to himself, but to his neighbours, and the whole community. He will be, so far, a better neighbour, friend, servant, master, son, father, subject, — than an illiterate barbarian.

I know, however, that there are some who disbelieve or doubt this last advantage, and who apprehend danger from the diffusion of knowledge among the labouring classes, lest

they should make an ill use of what they have learned, and lest they should become puffed up with conceit at their own acquirements, and should feel themselves above the humble toil by which they are to subsist.

Now, that an ill use may be made of this, or of any other kind of advantage, is undeniable. If you give money to the indigent, they may squander it in intemperance, or may become idle and improvident through reliance on your bounty. And restored health and prolonged life may be so employed as to become a curse instead of a blessing, both to the object of your kindness and to others. But shall we then abstain altogether from doing good to our brethren because it is possible for them perversely to turn good into evil?

But in respect of the particular danger now in question,—that of a man's becoming proud of his knowledge, and disdaining an humble station and a laborious occupation,—so far from this danger being increased by the widest possible diffusion of education, this, on the contrary, is one of the best safeguards against it. The evil is much the more likely to occur among a people where gross ignorance is the

rule, and education the exception. The humblest rudiments of learning, where the attainment of them is very *rare*, and elevates a man above his fellows, may generate pride and fretful discontent. But no one is likely to pride himself on that which is no *distinction*. No one would be likely to disdain the condition of a labourer, from having only as much knowledge as his fellow-labourers. Nor, again, would any one, however uneducated, be *industrious, through ignorance*, if he could subsist in comfort without labour. What urges a man to labour, is, not want of education, but the necessity of earning his bread, or the desire of bettering his condition. And it would be absurd to suppose that the mass of the population would, if educated, prefer starving, or subsisting by beggary, or by fraud and plunder, to honest industry. On the contrary, as a general rule, it has always been found that the most idle and profligate of both sexes,—the greatest proportion of beggars and of criminals,—are to be found among the most illiterate and untaught.

Again, it is not in the best educated, but on the contrary, in the most ignorant com-

munities, that men of some degree of knowledge and acquirements and of depraved dispositions, are the most likely to obtain a mischievous influence. Such a man is extremely likely to be a *leader* of popular commotions, and of resistance to the laws ; but he is not likely to be one of those *led*. The instruments with which such a man works, are the ignorant and unthinking—and therefore easily deluded—populace. The better any one is educated, the more likely he is to understand, not only his duties, but his true interests ; and, therefore, the less is he fitted to be a tool of those who would make use of him for their own private interest and ambition.

If, indeed, the labouring population consisted of *slaves*,—governed like domestic animals, not for the general good, but for the benefit of their masters, it might be expedient to enact the law which does actually exist in some slave-states, prohibiting their receiving any education. For those who would keep their fellow-creatures in the condition of brutes, act consistently in degrading them as much as possible into the character of brutes. But a

government, properly so called—*i.e.* whose object is the welfare of the whole community—will always be best obeyed by those who are best qualified to understand the necessity, and the advantages, of government, and the absurdity as well as wickedness of attempting to improve their condition by lawless outrages.

Then, again, another evil which some apprehend from the diffusion of education,—the propagation, by means of noxious publications, of irreligious and seditious principles—of profligacy, blasphemy, and impurity ;—this also is a danger which, so far from being increased by making education general, can be combated in no other way. For some there will always be found, able and willing to be the apostles of infidelity and sedition ; as some of you are perhaps aware is the case, not only in several parts of England, but in this very city ; and the ears, at least, of an illiterate multitude cannot be stopped against such teachers : nor can the poison thus spread through that illiterate multitude be counteracted by the antidote of *useful publications* ; which it is vain to circulate among those unable to read.

And what sort of persons will be most easily infected by such poisons—the enlightened, or the ignorant?—those who are able to read the arguments on both sides for themselves, or those who are left to hear—and probably to hear uncontradicted—whatever is spoken or read to them by their associates?—those who have been accustomed early to the exercise of their faculties, or those whose minds have been left wholly untrained? Is it, in short, in the light, or in the darkness, that falsehood is the more easily passed off for truth? Vain must be every attempt to secure men by ignorance against meeting with temptations; and never can ignorance enable any one to resist them. It is far the wiser course, to fortify them early, by the best instruction we can supply, against the trials and dangers which they cannot avoid; so that unharmed they may “take up the serpents” they will meet in their path, and that “if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.”

There is another point also in which the mischiefs that may arise from perverted knowledge—the evil influence of those who make

a bad use of what they have learned, or whose moral qualities generally do not keep pace with their intellectual attainments—may be counteracted, and can only be counteracted, by the general diffusion of education. There are many humble, yet far from unimportant situations (which I need not instance, as they will readily occur to you) which cannot *possibly* be filled but by such as have a considerable share of education. If, therefore, there be but few of the lower orders who possess this, our choice being thus limited to a very small number, we are often compelled by the necessity of the case, to place in situations of great responsibility men of doubtful integrity, or of profligate habits, because no others can be found competent. Of this almost every one's experience may furnish examples: and thus bad men are empowered to do mischief,—vice is kept in countenance, and moral worth discouraged. Whereas, if education becomes very *general*, a wide choice will be allowed us; and out of the multitude who will be qualified in point of attainments to fill such situations, those of the most unexceptionable and deserving character

will, of course, be selected—to the great improvement of the public morals, as well as the advantage of their employers.

I cannot doubt, therefore, that both to the Country we belong to, and to our poorer brethren themselves, and to our heavenly Master, who regards even the least of them as his own brethren, we are strongly bound, to promote, when we have opportunity, the education of the children of those who cannot, unassisted, defray the expense, and to endeavour to impart to all, and to each of them, the best instruction that circumstances will allow.

With regard to the particular school for which I am soliciting your aid, I can safely say *, not only from careful inquiry, but in

* It may be needful to advert in this place to a report which has been circulated, (not more groundless, by the way, than several others on the same subject,) that the Provost and myself give little or no attention to the business of the Education-Board, and that consequently the Established Church is not duly represented there.

Were such a rumour confined to Dublin and the vicinity, it would not be worth notice, because it is perfectly well known to all who think it worth while to inquire—and indeed to many who do not—how emphatically it is the *reverse* of the fact. No one, in this city, need be ignorant how very rarely

some degree from my own personal knowledge, that it is highly deserving of support. It is open to, and actually contains children of different religious persuasions, who receive, each, the best instruction that the parents of each permit. Those of our own communion are, as I can testify from my own knowledge, assiduously catechized, and instructed in the religious principles of our Church; and all, of whatever denomination, are taught—in addition to the secular instruction they receive—the most important portions of Sacred History*. But no religious instruction is forced on any child against the will of its parents†. And it is in this way, surely, that the greatest amount of good is effected that it is in our power to effect.

To use arguments to prove this, is the less necessary, because such a system as I have just

it happens that either the Provost or myself are absent from any meeting of the Board; or how much and laboriously I am occupied at other times also, in business connected with it. But the circulation of the misstatement in other parts of Ireland, and in England, seems to call for this contradiction of it.

* See Note A, page 51.

† See Note B, page 52.

alluded to has stood the test of very long experience, and has been sanctioned by very general approbation, at our *University*; which, as you are, doubtless, well aware, admits students of various religious persuasions,—affords secular instruction to all,—and provides religious instruction also to those willing to receive it; but does not force its religious instruction on any who have a conscientious (however unreasonable) scruple against receiving it*. Those, therefore, who approve of the system pursued at Trinity College, and yet profess a conscientious objection to a school for the poor, conducted on the principles I have described, must be supposed—*unless, indeed, they would establish one rule for the rich and another for the poor*—to be proceeding on some misapprehension of the facts of the case, and to have taken up some mistaken notion as to the system actually pursued in such a school.

The governors, and patrons, and advocates of a University or a school, conducted on these principles, cannot, we may presume, but be

* See Note C, page 55.

convinced that such a course is calculated to effect, as I have said, the greatest amount of good that it is in our power to effect under the existing circumstances of this Country. For, any other course that could be adopted would manifestly tend to diminish the benefit conferred. If a school (and precisely the same reasoning will apply to the University also) were restricted to members of our own Church, this would cut off a very large portion of our fellow-citizens from the benefit of an education—less perfect, indeed, in our judgment, than we could wish, but incomparably preferable to none at all, or to any other that they would be likely to receive. And as for compelling all persons, of whatever persuasion, to receive instruction in the principles of our own Church, there are three decisive reasons—any one of them alone sufficient—against cherishing such a notion: we have neither the *right*, nor the *power*; and if we had both the right and the power, our labours on such a system would be *worse than useless*.

First, we have no *right* to do violence to any one's conscience, however mistaken his

persuasion may be. Our Great Master has expressly forbidden the employment of force in his cause; and has left his followers to advance the truth of his Gospel by the meekness of persuasion, and by the influence of good example.

And the *power*, as well as the right, is wanting, of resorting to secular coercion; for though a college or a school might compel all the *pupils* to receive instruction in their own doctrines, the law, as it now exists, will not allow us to compel any one to *become* a pupil; and the attempt to do violence to their religious scruples would induce the far greater part of them to withdraw.

And lastly, even if we had the right and the power to force religious instruction on all, such instruction so given would be even worse than *useless*. For religious precepts, we should remember, are not like some potent drug, which, whether swallowed willingly or unwillingly, will operate equally on the bodily system. One may be indeed compelled to make certain religious *professions*, or to commit to memory certain *words*; but religion itself, every one would acknowledge, must be in its own nature

voluntary. It is "with the heart," says the Apostle, that "man believeth unto righteousness;" and every thing pertaining to religion that is received not with sincere conviction and hearty good will, but with inward disbelief, and contempt or disgust, is not only unprofitable, but tends to alienate the mind from whatever is so learned*.

For these reasons, the governors of any college, or the patrons of any school, conducted on the principles I have been recommending, are justified in deciding that by this course they effect by far the greatest amount of good that is within their power.

And with respect to the peculiar locality of the school to which I am now inviting your support, I believe there is no doubt that you can ascertain, from the testimony of many persons—from several probably of those who now hear me—that the contrast is most striking, and beyond what any one could have hoped, between the present condition of that village, and what it was, previously to the establishment of

* See Note D, page 56.

the school, and of other charitable institutions introduced at the same time. It certainly does present a strong contrast (far as it still is from being every thing that we could desire) to several of those degraded, wretched, and barbarian districts which are still to be found, to the disgrace of this country, within a short distance; with the very worst of which it was, I understand, formerly on a level.

Many of the advantages we ourselves enjoy, we are apt, through long familiarity, not to prize as highly as we ought, and with due gratitude to the Providence which bestows them on us. Look at the condition, for instance, of the wandering savages of Australia, or of several parts of America. If you contemplate them, not as pictured in the day-dreams of poets, living a life of pure and happy simplicity, but in the descriptions of those who have *visited* them, you will see people scarcely human in any thing but the form; brutish, and even more odious than the brutes, because *degraded*; ferocious, mischievous, treacherous; living in perpetual insecurity—in constant distress for want of the necessities of life, and

knowing no gratification but disgusting sensuality, and the plunder and slaughter of their fellow-creatures. Such is Savage man.

Now, what makes the difference between any one of us, my Christian friends, and these debased and wretched beings? Evidently it is *education*. Each one of you would, if by some accident you had been left alone in infancy on the coast of New Holland, and reared among those savage tribes, have grown up to manhood such as one of them. And yet the humblest individual in this congregation, who does but know how to read, has a far greater superiority to those savages than the most eminently learned men in the whole world have to him. Are you then duly sensible of the bounty of that Providence who has thus favoured you? If so, you cannot but rejoice in the opportunity of doing something, according to your means, towards imparting a like benefit to your poorer brethren.

A truly grateful heart longs for some occasion of testifying gratitude, and of making, if possible, some *return* to his benefactor. But what return can we make to God? What *need*

can He have of our gifts and our services? In what way can we testify our thankfulness for all we have, and all we hope for, from Him? He himself, my Christian friends, has answered that inquiry, when speaking in his Son Jesus Christ. Our Blessed Lord has graciously declared that, "unprofitable servants" as we are, we yet *can* make to Him what He is pleased to reckon as a return. He has declared that He will regard himself as *represented* by the humblest of our poor brethren, whom He condescends to reckon as his own. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Verily I say unto you, Forasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

NOTE A. TO PAGE 43.

The notion that the Scriptures are *excluded* from the schools in connexion with the National Board, and that the children brought up in them, have no means of acquiring any knowledge of what pertains to the Christian religion, has prevailed to a degree which is really wonderful, considering that it never had any foundation in fact, and that correct information on the subject is so easily accessible. For instance, the Rev. Mr. Heffernan of Newport, county Tipperary, states, in a pamphlet lately published, (p. 49-50.) that he, in common, as he believes, with many of his brethren, had till very lately, an entirely erroneous impression as to this point. And yet, he also says (p. 105-106.) "to this post (the living of Newport) I was appointed by the late Bishop of Cashel, a sincere advocate of the National system, after a correspondence—and I record it with double pleasure, as a grateful tribute to his amiable condescension and liberality,—in which he stated his views of the National system, I mine. My last letter contained a distinct and unequivocal declaration, that I could not co-operate with the National Board. . . . His next letter contained not the slightest allusion to our previous correspondence, but a most kind and unqualified offer of the preferment I now hold."

Yet all the time, Mr. Heffernan's undiminished disapprobation of the system was entirely or chiefly based, it seems, on the above-mentioned misapprehension: one which the Bishop might so easily have removed!

Those who mean by "exclusion of the Scriptures," the "exclusion of *compulsion*," have, certainly, a right to state their objections to the system of non-compulsion; but they

are surely bound in fairness to express, in plain terms, what it is that they do mean, instead of using an expression likely to be understood in a sense at variance with the truth. (See the Reports of the Commissioners ; especially the Ninth.)

It may be worth while to mention also in this place, that some confusion of thought seems to have arisen from a careless employment, or from an indistinct apprehension, of such current phrases as “the pure word of God”—“the very inspired Scriptures themselves”—“the entire Bible”—“the genuine records of inspiration unmixed with any thing human,” &c. Some persons seem to have thus been led practically to forget that there is no *inspired book* in the *English* language ; and that the Scriptures properly so called,—*i. e.* the Hebrew and Greek originals—are not read in *any* school for the poor. Nor is there, I apprehend, any school in which any translation of the whole Bible is read *all through*. The utmost that the children ever read, is, *portions* of some *translations* of Scripture ; whether those portions are selected at the option of the master, or in whatever other way.

Some members, however, of our Church, are accustomed to speak of the “authorized version,” as if they understood that version to be the “SCRIPTURE” which is referred to in the Articles as the standard and rule of faith ; forgetting that *no version* is ever referred to as inspired, and that the Articles were drawn up *before* the “authorized version” was composed.

NOTE B. TO PAGE 43.

Some persons have denied the *right* of parents to debar their children from the Scriptures, or to train them in a false religion ; by which, if they mean that the parents are *not right* in thus acting, or in adhering themselves to a false religion, I fully agree with them. But this is not the question. The

question is, whether *we* have any right to interfere in religious concerns between parent and child, or to compel any one to profess a religion which he does not believe, and to take part in any religious exercises which his conscience disapproves. A man is not *right* who hoards up all his money, or squanders it in extravagant follies: but if *we* were thereupon to claim the right to dictate to him how he should dispose of his money, we should evidently be seeking to encroach on the rights of property, and to make that property no longer *his*, but ours. Some, however, have even gone so far as to introduce the supposed case (as if parallel to the foregoing), of a parent's instigating a child to commit theft or murder; which clearly he would have no rightful power to do. I have even seen, in a public document, inserted in newspapers, the recognition of a parent's right in respect of his child's religious education stigmatized as "the sanction of *unlawful*, because unscriptural, restraint on the part of the parent."

We ought to consider, however, how far the advocates of such a principle would be led by it, if they should be intrusted with power fully to follow it out. Having declared that a parent's control over the religious education of his children is "unlawful,"—*i.e.* that it *ought* to be *made* unlawful,—they must of course proceed to advocate a law for *compelling* every parent to *send* his children to their schools. For it is manifest that to leave a man at liberty to train up his children in his own religion at *home*, or in some *other* school, would not effect their object, and would be giving a "sanction to that restraint on the parent's part" which they deprecate, and which they place on a par with inciting his children to steal, or to commit murder.

But the distinction between the two cases (which is fully recognized by the law of the land) is very obvious to any man of common sense, who does but resort to the simple rule of doing as he would be done by. He had only to consider what

he would think, (supposing he lived under a Mahometan governor, or of such as professed a different form of Christianity from his own,) of a law compelling him to have his children brought up Mahometans, &c. It would be in vain for him to allege "My religion is true, and Mahometism false." The governor might reply, "*I think the reverse; and it is I that must decide, supposing that all things pertaining to human good came within the rightful province of the civil magistrate.*" No answer could be given, except by maintaining (that which is the right principle) the restriction of the proper department of the secular magistrate to *secular* concerns—to the protection of men's life and property.

This principle, which by some is alluded to as "Warburton's theory," as if it had originated with *him*, was evidently that of Christ and his apostles, and must have been perfectly familiar to the minds of the early Christians for several centuries. For the sacred writers continually exhort their converts, without any express limitation or restriction, to "submit to *every ordinance of man* for the Lord's sake;" teaching that "the powers that be are ordained of God for the *punishment of evil-doers*, and for the praise of them that do well;" and that "rulers are not *a terror to good works, but to evil.*" Yet we know that these rulers were then, and long after, persecuting heathen idolaters; and we are sure that the apostles were not understood, nor could have meant to be understood, as including under "evil-doers" the transgressors of the *laws relating to religion*, and inculcating obedience to the rulers in *those* points. The early Christians, therefore, could not but have understood that the *proper province of civil government* was confined to *secular* matters. Nor could they, with any good reason at least, have supposed that a Christian emperor had, as such, any more extended rightful control. The Christian emperors, indeed, were often as fierce persecutors as the Pagans had been, of those of their Christian subjects—Atha-

nasians or Arians, as the case might be—who differed in creed from themselves. But it would have been absurd to suppose that the apostles meant that a man should indeed *disobey* the command of the magistrates to renounce *Christianity* for *Paganism*, but should *obey* them if commanded to renounce what he believed to be *pure and genuine* Christianity for what he considered as an heretical *corruption* of it. The apostolical principle, therefore, of placing under the direct and proper control of the civil magistrate secular concerns, and *those only*, must, in all fair interpretation, be considered as of universal application.—See Essay I. on the Kingdom of Christ, Appendix A.

NOTE C. TO PAGE 44.

I would not be understood to deny the sincerity of those who oppose the system of the National Schools: *i. e.* their sincerely wishing for a different system. But the real ground of their opposition must be something different from that which many of them put forth; viz.: a conscientious *scruple against affording any secular instruction* to any one who will not receive what they think the *best religious* instruction. For it would be judging them very unfavourably, and I hope incorrectly, to suppose that they really do feel such a scruple, and yet are willing to stifle it for the sake of emolument to themselves or their friends. Trinity College, Dublin, would lose many students, if Roman Catholics and Presbyterians were not permitted, as they are, to receive education there without any interference with their religion; to absent themselves from such religious teaching and exercises as they conscientiously disapprove; and to receive what they do approve, from ministers of their own persuasion. And the same may be said of many schools kept by Protestant clergymen, which

are open to Roman Catholic pupils on the same conditions. It can hardly be supposed that the tutors and schoolmasters who afford instruction on these terms, really believe such a procedure to be in itself a wicked and ungodly thing, which nevertheless they consent to be parties to, for the sake of private gain.

NOTE D. TO PAGE 47.

Mr. Heffernan justly remarks, in his pamphlet, (which is well worth reading,) how much every right-minded clergyman would be shocked at the profanation of permitting—much more, compelling—persons to partake of the Lord's Supper without any sincere wish to do so, or heartfelt devotion, or inward reverence for the ordinance. And we ought, as he observed, to have similar feelings respecting any similar profanation in regard to all religious exercises and studies. We should remember, as the late Dr. Arnold has observed, with the eloquent simplicity which characterizes his writings, that, “the highest truth, if professed by one who believes it not in his heart is, to him, a lie, and that he sins greatly by professing it. Let us try as much as we will, to convince our neighbours; but let us beware of influencing their conduct, when we fail in influencing their convictions. He who bribes or frightens his neighbour into doing an act which no good man would do for reward, or from fear, is tempting his neighbour to sin; he is assisting to lower and harden his conscience—to make him act for the favour and from the fear of man, instead of for the favour and from the fear of God: and if this be a sin in him, it is a double sin in us to tempt him to it.

SERMON III.

THE SEARCH AFTER INFALLIBILITY,* CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO THE DANGER OF RELIGIOUS ERRORS ARISING WITHIN THE CHURCH IN THE PRIMITIVE AS WELL AS IN ALL LATER AGES.

ACTS XX. 29, 30, 31.

I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

THIS parting admonition of the Apostle Paul to the Christian ministers of the Churches of

* Preached in the Cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin, on the occasion of the Ordination held on Sunday, the 22nd August, 1847, and published with the following dedication:—

Miletus and Ephesus, cannot be read by any careful student of Scripture without deep interest. But it will be found, on attentive reflection, to suggest even more matter for profitable meditation, and even more of instructive practical lessons, than might at first sight appear.

And to some of these I propose now to call your attention.

I. In the first place you will observe, that what the Apostle here says to the clergy whom he is addressing, is of a piece with much that we find in several of his Epistles. In his Epistles to the Corinthians, especially the Second, he warns them against “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ, and ministers of righteousness;” even as “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light:”—men seeking to disparage Paul’s apostolic authority, and to introduce

“To the Candidates ordained at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday, 22nd August, 1847, this Discourse, published at their request, is dedicated, with earnest wishes for their present and eternal welfare, and for the Divine Blessing on their ministerial labours, by their sincere friend and fellow-labourer, The Author.”

doctrines opposed to his. "There must be," says he, "heresies among you, that they which are approved (*δοκιμοι*) may be made manifest among you." 1 Cor. xi. 19. The Epistle to the Galatians, again, is almost made up of similar cautions. The Philippians also are warned (chap. iii.), in like manner, to be on their guard against teachers who corrupted the Gospel. Cautions of the same kind are addressed to almost all the other Churches to which he wrote; and both Timothy and Titus are earnestly and repeatedly exhorted to watch against the inroads of these corruptions.

The Apostle Peter also cautions the disciples against those "unlearned and unstable" persons, who "wrest," he tells them, "the Scriptures to their own destruction."

The Apostle John, again, in his Epistles, is chiefly occupied in warning his hearers against those false prophets,—those "wolves, in sheep's clothing,"—of whom his Master had prophesied, and bid His disciples beware.

And here we find Paul, in his farewell address to the Elders, earnestly reiterating the solemn warning of this danger, which, he tells them,

he had been continually repeating for three years. “From among themselves,” he tells them,—“from the very bosom of their own Church,”—men will arise teaching perverted doctrines*, “to draw away [the] disciples† after themselves.”

Now it might seem wonderful, or even incredible, if we had not these records before us, that any such thing should have taken place; I mean, that in the very times of the Apostles themselves, whose authority from Heaven was attested by their miraculous powers, any false teachers should have not only arisen, but should have gained a hearing, and been able to draw away the disciples by pretending to an authority equal or superior to that of the genuine Apostle. And if we had not providentially possessed these records of the early dangers of the Church, we might have been disheartened or utterly thrown into despondency at the view of the various errors introduced in later times by men of high pretensions as religious teachers. We might have felt as if God had forsaken

* διεστραμμενα.

† τους μαθητας.

His Church when He withdrew from it the guidance of the inspired Apostles, and left Christians to find their safety in vigilant and careful and candid examination of every doctrine taught. But, as it is, we see that, from the very first, this care and watchfulness were indispensably necessary to guard against the danger of false teachers introducing corruptions of the genuine Gospel. Strange and incredible as it may seem to us that any such men should have attempted, and should have succeeded in the attempt, to rival the Apostles, we are distinctly informed that so it was: and that Christians were then required to be on their guard against the grievous wolves in sheep's clothing, who would enter in, not sparing the flock.

We ought not, therefore, either to wonder, or to despond, at finding Christians in all subsequent ages exposed to the same dangers, and called on to exercise the same vigilance, as in the very times of the Apostles themselves.

II. And this leads me, in the second place, to the consideration of the way in which Paul tells his hearers to provide against the danger.

Does he promise them that the *primitive*

Church shall be safe from it?—that no inroads of error will take place for the first three or four centuries? On the contrary, he speaks of the danger as immediate.

Or does he tell them that they will find their safety in *apostolic succession*?—that it is miraculously provided that no teacher shall ever mislead them, who has but been regularly ordained by himself, or by those appointed by him to succeed him in the office of ordaining? On the contrary, he warns the Elders that even from the midst of their own Body,—of their own selves,—will arise men teaching a perverted Gospel to draw away the disciples after them.

Or again, does he tell them that when any point of doubt and difficulty arises, they are to find safety in making a reference to Peter, and to those who shall be divinely appointed from time to time as his successors and representatives, for infallible decisions and directions? Not a word is said of any Apostle but himself; or of any one who should succeed him in the apostolic office. To himself, during his life, they would naturally apply by letter, if

opportunity offered, for directions in any case of doubt that might arise. But not even any Apostle,—much less any successor of an Apostle,—is mentioned by Paul as the oracular guide, whom, after his own death, they were to consult.

Or, does he bid them resort to some central Church,—whether at Jerusalem, or at Rome, or at Byzantium,—and seek there for infallible guidance * ?

Or does he direct them to summon a General Council, and refer every question that may arise to the decision of a majority of its votes; with a full assurance that these should be so supernaturally overruled by the Holy Spirit as to secure them from the possibility of error ?

No: he makes no allusion whatever to any other Church or Prelate; to any successor of Peter or of the other Apostles; or to any infallible Council, as their guide. But he tells them to TAKE HEED TO THEMSELVES, and to the flock they are set over; he tells them to “*watch*;

* See the Remarks on the “Pillar and Ground of the Truth,” in Dr. Hind’s most valuable Tract on “Scripture and the Authorized Version.” There is a strong preponderance of probability in favour of his view.

and he exhorts them to remember his own earnest warnings to them.

Now, if there *had* been provided by the Most High, any such safeguard as I have alluded to,—if Paul had known of any order of men, any Prelate, any particular Church, or General Council, designed by Providence as an infallible guide, and a sure remedy against errors and corruptions, would he not have been sure, on such an occasion as this, to give notice of it to his hearers? If, when he foresaw a perilous navigation for the vessel of the Church, he had known of a safe port, just at hand, and readily accessible, is it credible that he would have never alluded to it, but have left them exposed to the storms? Would he have been, in that case, “pure”—as he declares he was—“from the blood of all men?” Can any one seriously think, that against the dangers which he had been warning them of, and weeping over, for three years, he knew of a complete safeguard, and yet was so wanting in his duty,—so careless of their well-being,—as never to make the slightest mention of anything of the kind? To suppose this would be to suppose him destitute

not only of all faithfulness in his high office, but of common prudence and rationality.

And yet if any such provision really had been made by the Author of our faith, it is utterly inconceivable that the Apostle Paul should have been—and that too on such an occasion as this—left in utter ignorance of its existence. Whatever may be the precise meaning of our Lord's promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," it is at least perfectly clear what it could *not* mean: it could not relate to something either unknown to Paul, or kept back by him from his hearers. All that he knew, and that it was for their benefit to learn, he had, as he solemnly declares, taught to them; and this was no less, he assures them, than "the whole counsel and design of God." "I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this,

that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears."

From all this we may learn, among other things, how great is the mistake of those who are satisfied to trace up some doctrine or practice not countenanced by Scripture, to a very early period; to what they call the Primitive Church; and consider this as establishing a divine sanction for what may have been, after all, one of the "perverse things" introduced by false teachers, and against which Paul so earnestly warned the Elders.

III. The third remark which I have to make on this passage is, that the exposure of Christians to these dangers, and the call upon them,—both ministers and laity,—for the continued exercise of vigilant caution,—this is far from appearing to us either *acceptable* or *probable*. It is not at all what man's *wishes* would have called for, or his *conjectures* anticipated, in a

Divine Revelation; but is aliene both from his feelings and his reasonings.

1. To examine and re-examine,—to reason and reflect,—to hesitate, and to decide with caution,—to be always open to evidence,—and to acknowledge that, after all, we are liable to error;—all this is, on many accounts, unacceptable to the human mind,—both to its diffidence and to its pride,—to its indolence,—its dread of anxious cares,—and to its love of self-satisfied and confident repose. And hence there is a strong prejudice in favour of any system which promises to put an end to the work of inquiry at once and for ever, and to relieve us from all embarrassing doubt and uncomfortable self-distrust. And this is done, either by setting forth the authority of an infallible Church, which is to prescribe, on every point, what we are to believe and to do; thus relieving us from all trouble and anxiety, and from all necessity of acting on the Apostle's warning to "take heed to ourselves;" or again, by putting in place of such a Church, *immediate inspiration* from heaven, whether bestowed on each individual who belongs to a certain sect or party,

or on some highly-gifted leader, who will communicate to his followers the messages he receives from Heaven. Widely different in many points as these sects, and parties, and churches are from each other, they all agree in the one fundamental point just noticed. They all address themselves to that powerful principle in human nature I have been adverting to, the *craving for infallibility* in religious matters.

I call it “a craving for infallibility” (although hardly any one is found in words claiming, or expecting to be, personally infallible), because it is evident that he who is infallibly following an infallible guide, is himself infallible. If his decisions on each point coincide exactly with those of an authority which is exempt from error, that *his* decisions are exempt from error, is not only an undeniable, but almost an identical proposition;—it is as plain as that things which are equal to the same are equal to each other.

But this, though self-evident as soon as stated, is sometimes lost sight of in practice. A man will speak of himself as being fallible, and as having no expectation of being otherwise. But

his meaning must be (supposing him quite certain that he has an infallible guide, always accessible, and to which he constantly conforms),—his meaning must be, that he *would* be fallible if left to himself; that his exemption from the possibility of error is not inherent, but derived. But actually and practically he does consider himself infallible.

Though the gnomon of a sun-dial has no power in itself to indicate the hour, yet when the sun shines on it, the motions of its shadow must be as correct as those of the sun's rays which it follows. And, in like manner, *he* is infallible, practically, in his belief, who always believes exactly what an infallible Church or leader believes.

This craving, then, I say, for infallibility, predisposes men towards the pretensions, either of a supposed unerring Church, or of those who claim or who promise immediate inspiration. And, accordingly, I have known persons sometimes waver for a time between these two classes of pretensions, and ultimately give in to the one or to the other. And, again, you may find persons changing from the one to the other,

and sometimes thus changing more than once*; yet still always clinging to the confident expectation of finding that infallibility I have been speaking of. They are *inquiring* only after a way of exempting themselves from all further inquiry. Their *care* is only to relieve themselves ultimately from all further need of vigilant care. They are navigating in search of a perfectly safe haven in which the helm may be abandoned, and the vessel left to ride securely, without any need of watching the winds and currents, and of looking out for rocks and shoals. They hope to obtain, in all ages of the Church, that exemption from all need of vigilant circumspection, which was not granted even in the age of the Apostles; since we find that, even when there *were* these infallible guides on earth, Christians are perpetually warned of the danger of mistaking “false apostles” for genuine.

* And it might be added, that one may find instances of the same individual, himself unchanged, exposed to severe censures, at different times, not only from different persons, but even from the same, first for refusing to join the one party, and afterwards for refusing to join the other, most opposed to it.

2. But the promise of such infallible guidance as I have been speaking of, not only meets man's wishes, but, as I have observed above, his conjectures also. When we give the reins to our own feelings and fancies, such a provision appears as probable as it is desirable. If, antecedently to the distinct announcement of any particular Revelation, men were asked what kind of revelation they would *wish* to obtain, and again, what kind of Revelation they would think it the most reasonable and *probable* that God should bestow, they would be likely, I think, to answer *both* questions by saying, "Such a Revelation as should provide some infallible guide on earth, readily accessible to every man; so that no one could possibly be in doubt, on any point, as to what he was required to believe and to do; but should be placed, as it were, on a kind of plain high road, which he would only have to follow steadily, without taking any care to look around him; or, rather, in some kind of vehicle on such a road, in which he would be safely carried to his journey's end, even though asleep, provided he never quitted that vehicle.

“For, a man might say, ‘if a book is put into my hands containing a divine revelation, and in which are passages that may be differently understood by different persons,—even by those of learning and ability,—even by men professing each to have earnestly prayed for spiritual guidance towards the right interpretation thereof,—and if, moreover, this book contains, in respect of some points of belief and of conduct, no directions at all,—then there is a manifest *necessity* that I should be provided with an infallible interpreter of this book, who shall be always at hand to be consulted, and ready to teach me, without the possibility of mistake, the right meaning of every passage, and to supply all deficiencies and omissions in the book itself. For otherwise this revelation is, to *me*, no revelation at all. Though the book itself be perfectly free from all admixture of error,—though all that it asserts be true, and all its directions right, still it is no guide for *me*, unless I have an infallible certainty, on each point, what its assertions and directions *are*. It is in vain to tell me that the pole-star is always fixed in the north; I cannot steer my

course by it when it is obscured by clouds, so that I cannot be certain where that star is. I need a *compass* to steer by, which I can consult at all times. There is, therefore, a manifest necessity for an infallible and universally accessible interpreter on earth, as an indispensable accompaniment,—and indeed essential part,—of any divine revelation.’ ”

Such would be the reasonings, and such the feelings, of a man left to himself to consider what sort of revelation from Heaven would be the most acceptable, and also the most *probable*,—the most adapted to meet his *wishes* and his *wants*. And thus are men predisposed, both by their feelings and their antecedent conjectures, towards the admission of such pretensions as I have above alluded to.

And it may be added, that any one who is thus induced to give himself up implicitly to the guidance of such a supposed infallible authority, without presuming thenceforth to exercise his own judgment on any point relative to religion, or to think for himself at all on such matters,—such a one will be likely to regard this procedure as the very perfection of

pious *humility*,—as a most reverent observance of the rule of “lean not to thine own understanding;” though in reality it is the very error of improperly leaning to our own understanding. For, to resolve to believe that God *must* have dealt with mankind just in the way that *we* could *wish* as the most *desirable*, and in the way that to *us* seems the most *probable*,—this is, in fact, *to set up ourselves as His judges*. It is to dictate to Him, in the spirit of Naaman, who *thought* that the prophet would recover him by a touch; and who *chose* to be healed by the waters of Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, which he deemed better than all the waters of Israel.

But anything that falls in at once with men’s *wishes*, and with their *conjectures*, and which also presents itself to them in the guise of a *virtuous humility*,—this they are often found readily and firmly to believe, not only *without* evidence, but *against* all evidence.

And thus it is in the present case. The principle of which I have been speaking,—that every revelation from Heaven necessarily requires, as an indispensable accompaniment, an

infallible interpreter always at hand,—this principle clings so strongly to the minds of many men, that they are even found still to maintain it after they have ceased to believe in any revelation at all, or even in the existence of a God.

There can be, I conceive, no doubt of the fact, that very great numbers of men are to be found,—they are much more numerous in some parts of the Continent than among us*;—men not deficient in intelligence, nor altogether strangers to reflection, who, while they, for the most part, conform externally to the prevailing religion, are inwardly utter unbelievers in Christianity; yet still hold to the principle,—which, in fact, has had the chief share in *making* them unbelievers,—that the idea of a DIVINE REVELATION implies that of a universally accessible, INFALLIBLE INTERPRETER; and that the one without the other is an absurdity and contradiction.

I have said that it is this principle that has mainly contributed to *make* these men unbe-

* See note A. at the end of this Discourse.

lievers. For, when a tolerably intelligent and reflective man has fully satisfied himself that in point of fact no such provision *has* been made,—that no infallible and universally accessible interpreter does exist on earth (and this is a conclusion which even the very words of Paul, which I have taken as a text, would be alone fully sufficient to establish),—when, I say, he has satisfied himself of the *non-existence* of this interpreter, yet still adheres to the principle of its supposed *necessity*, the consequence is inevitable, that he will at once reject all belief of Christianity. The ideas of REVELATION, and of an unerring INTERPRETER, being, in his mind, inseparably conjoined, the overthrow of the one belief cannot but carry the other along with it. Such a person, therefore, will be apt to think it not worth while to examine the reasons in favour of any other form of Christianity, *not* pretending to furnish an infallible interpreter. This,—which, he is fully convinced is essential to a Revelation from Heaven,—is, by some Churches, *claimed*, but not *established*, while the rest do not even claim it. The pretensions of the one, he has listened

to, and deliberately rejected ; those of the other he regards as not even worth listening to.

The system, then, of reasoning from our own conjectures as to the necessity of the Most High doing so and so, tends to lead a man to proceed from the rejection of his own form of Christianity to a rejection of revelation altogether. But does it stop here? Does not the same system lead naturally to Atheism also? Experience shews that that consequence, which reason might have anticipated, does often actually take place. He who gives the reins to his own conjectures as to what is *necessary*, and thence draws his conclusions, will be likely to find a *necessity* for such divine interference in the affairs of the world as does not in fact take place. He will deem it no less than necessary, that an omnipotent and all-wise and beneficent Being should interfere to rescue the oppressed from the oppressor,—the corrupted from the corrupter,—to deliver men from such temptations to evil as it is morally impossible they should withstand ;—and, in short, to banish *evil* from the universe. And, since this is not done, he draws the inference that there cannot

possibly be a God, and that to believe otherwise is a gross absurdity. Such a belief he may, indeed, consider as useful for keeping up a wholesome awe in the minds of the vulgar; and for their sakes he may outwardly profess Christianity also; even as the heathen philosophers of old endeavoured to keep up the popular superstitions: but a real belief he will regard as something impossible to an intelligent and reflective mind.

I am very far from saying that all, or the greater part, of those who maintain the principle I am speaking of, are Atheists. We all know how common it is for men to fail of carrying out some principle (whether good or bad) which they have adopted;—how common, to maintain the premises, and not perceive the conclusion to which they lead. But the *tendency* of the *principle* itself is what I am speaking of: and the danger is anything but imaginary, of its leading, in fact, as it does naturally and consistently, to Atheism as its ultimate result.

I have said that the non-existence of such an

infallible interpreter as I have been alluding to, is what an intelligent man might be convinced of even by the very passage in the Book of Acts that is before us ;—by the absence of any reference or allusion to anything of the kind, in a discourse of the Apostle Paul's, in which he could not have failed to mention it, had it existed. But there are many other considerations from which the same conclusion follows :

1. For instance, the incompetency of men in general to exercise a correct judgment on questions pertaining to religion, is the main argument from which is inferred the necessity of an infallible interpreter. And yet this very argument destroys the ultimate conclusion maintained. For it presupposes that men *are* fit to decide, by their own judgment, that most difficult question, as to the claim of any particular Church, Party, or Person to *be* that interpreter. Certain passages of Scripture are alleged as implying that a certain Church is the infallible guide appointed by Providence to supersede our private judgment, which is incapable of deciding aright as to the meaning of Scripture.

But how am I to know that such is the true sense of those passages? If we *are* competent to judge of their meaning, then our alleged unfitness for judging, and the necessity thence inferred, are done away. If we are *not* competent to judge of the meaning of any doubtful passages, then, though we may admit the necessity of an unerring interpreter, we can never be sure that we have found one.

If,—which I believe is practically the commonest procedure,—we interpret those passages in conformity with the decision of our supposed infallible guide, and, in implicit reliance on that, we are palpably begging the question,—first assuming the infallibility of our guide, and by means of that assumption proceeding to prove it. And the same may be said in reference to those who, instead of any existing Church, appeal to “the Primitive Church,” and the “consensus Patrum,”—the common belief of all the orthodox writers of the first ages*.

* The reference so often made to the words of Vincentius Lirinensis,—“quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,” &c.—seems altogether unaccountable. That whatever is believed, and always has been, by all Christians, everywhere, is a

Whether that primitive Church, and those first ages, shall comprehend *three* centuries, or *four*, *five*, *six*, or *seven*; and *which* of the Fathers are to be enrolled among the orthodox, and *what are* the doctrines they taught, in works forty times more voluminous than the Bible, and capable of quite as great a variety of interpretations,—all these are questions to be decided in the first instance, by those who are, by supposition, incompetent judges, and who for that very reason are to rely implicitly on an infallible guide! This is to tell them that, because

part of the Christian faith, is a truism as barren as it is undeniable. It cannot possibly be called in to solve *any question in dispute*; since by its own character it relates expressly and exclusively to such points as *never have* been disputed among Christians.

But I conceive that those who appeal,—or rather, who pretend to appeal,—to this maxim, do, in reality, mean by “all,” merely “all the *orthodox*.” And who are the orthodox? I suppose, those whom *most* persons accounted such; and as each will be likely to apply that term to those whose doctrines he approves, the result will be, that the belief of the *majority* is to be the stamp of *orthodox belief*; and that this again is to represent *universal* [or catholic] belief; and, finally, that this so-called universal belief is to be the test of Gospel Truth.

On this principle, who were the orthodox and who the true worshippers, in Israel, when Elijah alone was left of the Lord’s prophets, while Baal’s prophets were 450 men?

they cannot steer their course without a pilot, they must make a voyage to a distant port in order to find one.

And the case is much the same with those who promise, or who lay claim to, such an inspiration from heaven as shall supersede all exercise of reason, and preclude the possibility of error. The exercise of reason is called for in the highest degree, and errors the most fatal are to be dreaded, in deciding on the conflicting claims laid before us,—on the claims of those who, while they teach the most opposite doctrines, all profess alike to be under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, and all fail in giving proof of it, as the Apostles did, by working sensible miracles in the presence of all, whether believers or unbelievers.

The alleged *necessity*, therefore, of an infallible interpreter, does of itself shut out from a reflecting mind the hope of *obtaining* one. For that necessity is inferred from such a supposed incapacity in us for judging rightly, as must equally unfit us for judging what claim to our confidence those have who offer to guide us.

2. Again, the alleged necessity is, for an infallible interpreter universally and readily *accessible*. And this no Church can even pretend to have provided. Supposing a central infallible Church to exist, it is not one Christian in ten thousand that can put himself in direct communication with its supreme governors. Each individual may, indeed, use its formularies, and may assign to them the same authority as to Scripture; but he can be no more competent to interpret the one than the other, or to supply aright any omissions; he is still in want of an infallible guide to direct him how to conform with unerring exactitude to his Church. And this guide must be, to the great mass of mankind, the *pastor* under whom each is placed. The pastor's conformity to the Church must be taken on his own word. If *he* be either ignorant, or erroneous, or dishonest,—if, in short, every individual pastor be not himself infallible, the Christian people, whose incompetency to judge for themselves has been all along presupposed, may be as much misled as in their perusal of the Scriptures.

3. Moreover, the claim to exemption from *error* and from *dissension*, if put forth by any Church which claims also *universality*, is thereby at once destroyed. If, indeed, any one claims infallibility on the ground of personal *inspiration* in himself, or in the leader he follows, he can only be met by a demand for proof, in the shape of *sensible miracles*, that his pretensions to this inspiration are better founded than those of others who differ from him. But when the two claims, to exemption from error and to universality, are *both* put forward, they mutually destroy each other by their practical incompatibility. If there be any universal Church of which *all professing Christians* are members, even though disobedient members,—subjects and children, even though undutiful and rebellious,—then this Church is manifestly not exempt from *error* and *dissension*; as is plain from the differences and controversies existing among Christians, and the refusal of many of them to submit to the decrees of this Church. If, again, there be any Church that is exempt from error among its members, it is, for the same reason, manifestly not *universal*.

There may, conceivably, be a Church to whose dominion and decisions all Christians *ought* to submit; but unless all *do* thus submit it cannot be properly called *universal* *.

Vain are the attempts made to get rid of this dilemma by urging that all false doctrines are *condemned* by the Authorities of the Church, and that the guilt of schism is incurred by all who do not obey them. Exemption from error, in any community, consists, not in the *condemnation* of error, but in its *non-existence* among the members of that community. Universality consists, not in a *claim* to universal dominion over all Christians, but in the *submission* of all Christians. Otherwise, there is no sect so small and inconsiderable that might not pretend, on equally good grounds, to be the universal and unerring Church. It might plead that its doctrines were received by *all* except *heretics*, and its supremacy acknowledged by *all* except *schismatics*; denouncing all as here-

* The urging of both these pretensions in conjunction, on reasons which profess to establish the one or the other separately, is an instance of what I have called, in the Elements of Logic, Book iii. § 11, the *fallacy of the Thaumatrope*.

tics and schismatics who did *not* receive those doctrines, and submit to that dominion. And this is merely saying, in other words, that all agree with it except those who disagree, and that all submit except such as refuse submission.

The claims, therefore, if so explained, become altogether nugatory. If *not* so explained, but taken in the natural sense of the language employed, they are negated by undeniable and notorious facts*.

From these and similar considerations a reflecting mind can hardly fail to arrive at the conclusion, that a universally accessible infallible guide, such as shall supersede all exercise of private judgment, and all need of vigilant care and inquiry, and shall preclude all possibility of error, has *not* been, in fact, provided. And if he still cling to the belief of the *necessity* of such a guide as an indispensable adjunct to a divine revelation, his road to infidelity is straight and short†.

Numbers there are, no doubt, who do not

* See note B. at the end of this Discourse.

† See note C. at the end of this Discourse.

follow up such principles to their legitimate consequences; many, from habitual want of reflection, and absence of mental cultivation; and others, from resolutely abstaining from all reasoning and all investigation, because they have determined to be believers, and consider their faith to be both the more praiseworthy, and also the more secure, the less they reflect and examine*. They dread the very danger I have been alluding to,—that reasoning will lead to infidelity; and they seek to avoid this danger, not by discarding the false principle from which that reasoning sets out, but by shunning all reasoning, and stifling all inquiry and reflection.

But this freedom from all uneasy doubt,—a desire for which leads to that craving for infallibility I have been speaking of,—this, after all, is not always attained by such a procedure. A lurking suspicion will often remain,—which a man vainly endeavours to stifle,—that the *foundation* is not sound. The super-

* See Essays on some Dangers to Christian Faith, &c. p. 108 [2nd edition], and Elements of Logic, p. 390 [8th edition], for a very curious exemplification of what is here said.

structure, indeed, may be complete. Once granted that the church, sect, party, or leader, we have taken as our guide, is perfectly infallible, and there is an end of all doubts and cares respecting particular points. But an uneasy doubt will sometimes haunt a man,—in spite of his efforts to repress it, and however strenuously he may deny, even to himself, its existence,—whether the infallibility claimed, which is the basis of the whole fabric, be really well established. A suspicion will occasionally cross the mind, however strenuously repelled, “IS THERE NOT A LIE IN MY RIGHT HAND?” And the reluctance often shewn to examine the foundation, and ascertain whether it is really sound, is an indication, not of full confidence in its firmness, but of a lurking suspicion that it will not bear examining.

It is thus that the craving after the mental repose of infallible certainty tends to defeat its own object. Many, however, no doubt, do really enjoy the confident, though groundless, security they boast of. And many, we may expect, will complain of, and censure, and reject, what I have been saying, on the ground

that it is a "cheerless" doctrine. And this charge is, to a certain extent, true. To be told to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," may be less "cheering" than to be told that we have no need for any fear and trembling. When Paul "ceased not for three years to warn every one, night and day, with TEARS," it was not, certainly, because he judged this to be the most *cheering* to his people, but because he knew it to be the most for their real good, and the most conformable to truth. It was precisely because he was aware that pains-taking vigilance is less agreeable than confident and boastful security,—it was for this very reason, doubtless,—that he was so assiduous in his warnings, lest any of his people should be,—as so many are, now, and in every age,—led away blindfold by their wishes, and flattered to their ruin by deceitful teachers. It is a common error, and one which men always need to be put on their guard against, to trust to boastful promises, and to lean upon pleasant and cheering hopes, without examining well whether these promises and hopes can rationally be depended on.

But it is the part of true wisdom not to lose, in a vain effort after what Providence has denied us, the advantages which it does place within our reach.

Difficult indeed it is,—or rather impossible,—for us to understand why God has dealt with Man as He has. We may be unable to answer the question, why the Revelation He has bestowed has not been accompanied by the gift of an infallible interpreter on earth, accessible to all men, and precluding all possibility of doubt as to the meaning of any part of it. It may be hard to explain, why, both in this and in many other most important matters also, Man should have been left to act on his own responsibility, and according to the best of his own fallible judgment; exposed to various dangers, and called on for the exercise of that vigilant care, which, we find, is, in point of fact, often not exercised. We may be unable, in short, to understand *why Earth is not Heaven*;—why EVIL of any kind is permitted to exist.

All this we may be unable to explain; but our inability to explain will not alter facts; and it is for us to make the best use of things

as they *are*, instead of wondering or seeking to understand why they were not made otherwise.

That spurious humility above alluded to, the implicit reliance on fallible man, must be discarded; and true humility must take its place. Instead of considering what, according to our notions, God *must* have done, or *ought* to have done, we should inquire what He *has* done; and what use we are allowed and expected to make of it.

If we inquire whether the Holy Scriptures did really come from Him, we shall find proof abundantly sufficient to satisfy a candid and humble mind; but not sufficient—strange as this may appear to *us*—to *force* conviction on the uncandid and arrogant. And if we inquire for what purposes the Scriptures were given, and how we are to make use of the gift, they will themselves abundantly teach us. They were evidently given us to enlighten the path of those who will open their eyes to the light, and take heed to their steps; but not of such as love darkness better than light, or view the light through the discoloured glass of their own

prejudices and inclinations, or deliver themselves up to be led blindfold by blind guides. They were given, not to supersede, but to exercise, our diligence and watchful care. They abound (as we have seen) in warnings of the danger of perversions and false doctrines. And they bid us Christian ministers “take heed to ourselves and to the flocks committed to our care.” *We* are to study, to the best of our power, to attain to the true meaning of them ourselves, and to impart it to our people, but with a full conviction and confession of our own fallibility.

To complain of this,—to reject or undervalue the revelation God has bestowed, urging that it is no revelation to us, or an insufficient one, because unerring certainty is not bestowed also,—because we are required to exercise patient diligence and watchfulness, and candour, and humble self-distrust,—this would be as unreasonable as to disparage and reject the bountiful gift of eye-sight, because men’s eyes have sometimes deceived them;—because men have mistaken a picture for the object imitated, or a mirage of the desert for a lake; and have fan-

cied they had the evidence of sight for the sun's motion ; and to infer from all this that we ought to blindfold ourselves, and be led henceforth by some guide who pretends to be himself not liable to such deceptions.

The two great volumes,—that of Nature and that of Revelation,—which God has opened before us for our benefit, are in this respect analogous*. Both are, in themselves, exempt from error ; but they do not confer complete exemption from all possibility of error on the student of them. As the laws of Nature are in themselves invariable, but yet are sometimes imperfectly known, and sometimes mistaken, by natural philosophers ; so the Scriptures are intrinsically infallible, but do not impart infallibility to the student of them. Even by the most learned they are in many parts imperfectly understood ; by the “unlearned and unstable” they are liable to be “wrested to their own destruction.”

We have indeed the gracious promise of God's Holy Spirit to “help our infirmities,”

* See Essays on some Dangers to Christian Faith, &c. Essay III. s. 5.

both in respect of our faith and of our conduct;—to guard us not only against doctrinal error, but also, no less, against sin;—to further our growth both in *grace*, and also in the *knowledge* of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are sure that, as far as we *are* under the guidance of that Spirit, we cannot but be right both in our belief and our practice *. But how far we *are*, in each instance, thus guided, we must not presume to pronounce with certainty. “It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do,” (and, we may add, to judge and believe also) “of his good pleasure;” but this is given by the Apostle as a reason, not for sitting down

* There seems no good ground for inferring from our Lord’s promise to be with his people “always, even unto the end of the world,” that He must have conferred on them, or on some portion of them, *infallibility* in *judgment*, any more than *impeccability* in moral *conduct*; which is, at least, not inferior in importance. The Holy Spirit which He promised should be “given to them that ask it,” is not more needed, or more promised, with a view to correctness of *belief*, than to holiness of *life*: and yet, with respect to this last, most men admit that, “if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:” why should we not be equally ready to admit that “if we say we have no *error*, we deceive ourselves?” If we utter with sincerity the words “who can tell how oft he *offendeth*? O cleanse thou me from my secret faults!” we shall not fail to add, “who can tell how oft he *mistaketh*?”

in careless and self-confident security, but that we should “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.” And this same anxious and diligent care must be shewn, among other things, in our study of God’s Holy Word*.

“If we say that we have no sin,”—and equally if we say that we have no error,—“we deceive ourselves:” for whatever part of our conduct, and of our opinions, may be in fact perfectly right, we are not authorized con-

* Every one, doubtless, is led to what is right both in faith and practice, as far as he is led by the Spirit of Christ; but how far he *is*, in each instance, under that guidance, he cannot know with certainty till the day of judgment. While continually aiming at perfection, both in belief and practice, the Christian is never authorized to “count himself to have apprehended.” Though he may, in point of fact, be right, he must beware of the arrogance of confidently pronouncing and insisting on his own unerring rectitude, unless he shall have received an immediate revelation, and can produce his credentials as an inspired messenger from God.

As for those who do appeal,—in support of a claim to continued, or to renewed inspiration in their respective Churches, or in the leaders they venerate,—to sensibly miraculous proofs, such as gifts of tongues, gifts of healing, &c., these persons, how much soever they may fail in establishing the miraculous *facts*, are at least consistent and intelligible in the conclusions they maintain. The test they appeal to is fair:—“The God that answereth by fire, let him be God.”—*Dangers to Christian Faith*, &c., Essay III. s. 4, pp. 146, 148.

fidently to pronounce that it is so. “I judge not,” says the Apostle Paul, “mine own self, for I know nothing by myself,—(i. e. I am not conscious of any failure in my ministerial duties);—“yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord.”

Listen *, then, my Christian friends, to this blessed Apostle; learn what he has taught; and attend to the warnings he has given. And let no one persuade you, that by doing this you will be thrown into distressing and incurable doubts and perplexities. Fear not, that by forbearing to forestall the judgment of the last day,—by not presuming to dictate to the Most High, and boldly to pronounce in what way He *must* have imparted a revelation to man,—by renouncing all pretensions to infallibility, whether an immediate and personal, or a derived infallibility,—by owning yourself to be neither impeccable nor infallible (both claims are alike groundless), and by consenting to undergo those trials of vigilance and of patience which God has appointed for you,—fear not

* See Essays (First Series) on Some Peculiarities of the Christian Religion, pp. 360–362, *note*.

that by this you will forfeit all cheerful hope of final salvation,—all “joy and peace in believing.” The reverse of all this is the reality.

As far as any one is conscious of striving, with humble prayer for Divine aid, to do his best, in the way God has directed, he may reasonably hope to be preserved from all fatal errors and deadly sins; and he may trust that any mistakes into which he may have fallen, not through carelessness or perversity, but from mere error of judgment or unavoidable ignorance, will not be imputed to him as sins, but that he will “be accepted according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

Those have, in reality, more to dread, who, professing to renounce all private judgment, have based their whole system of faith on human conjectures as to what a Divine Revelation *must necessarily* be; and who have shut their eyes to the many plain warnings of our Lord and his Apostles, to “take heed to ourselves.” Paul has declared, that if even “an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel than that which he has delivered, let him be accursed;” and he has left us a written record

of his teaching, with which to compare whatever is proposed for our acceptance as Gospel truth; thus, according to our Lord's precept, judging of the tree by its fruits. Great, then, must be the danger of those who, in fact, *reverse* this precept, and judge of *the fruits by the tree*; by at once concluding, that whatever is taught by the Holy Church, or whatever such and such a person professes to have had revealed to him from Heaven, and to be moved by the Holy Spirit to utter, must be Gospel truth, however at variance with God's written Word.

And as their real danger is great, so they do not always (as I have above observed) succeed even in lulling themselves into complete security. While they crave for more than God has given, and will not be satisfied without that infallible certainty of exemption from error, which would cut off all need of vigilance against error, and of inquiry after truth,—they often (besides building, on a false foundation, a superstructure of error) fail also of that confident repose and peace of mind which they have aimed at. And those, on the other hand,

who, in true humility, set themselves to conform to God's directions, will be partakers of His promised blessings. While such Christians as have sought rather for *peace*,—for mental tranquillity and satisfaction,—than for *truth*, will often fail both of truth and peace, those of the opposite disposition are more likely to attain both, from their gracious Master. He has taught us to “take heed that we be not deceived,” and to “beware of false prophets;” and He has promised us His own peace and heavenly comfort. He has bid us watch and pray; He has taught us, through his blessed Apostle, to “take heed to ourselves,” and to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling;” and He has declared, through the same Apostle, that He “worketh in us;” He has bid us “rejoice in hope;” He has promised that He “will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear;” and He has taught us to look forward to the time when we shall no longer “see as by means of a mirror*, darkly, but face to face;”—when we shall

* Δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι.—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

know, “not in part, but even as we are known;”—when faith shall be succeeded by certainty, and hope be ripened into enjoyment. His precepts and His promises go together. His support and comfort are given to those who seek for them in the way He has Himself appointed.

Teach this to your people, you, my Brethren, who are engaged, or are about to engage, in the Sacred Ministry. Teach them to trust in God, and not transfer their allegiance to uninspired Man. Instruct them to the best of your ability, according to your solemn vow, out of the Scriptures. Refer them to these; and teach them to search the Scriptures for themselves (like the Bereans of old), “to see whether those things be so” which they shall have heard from you; and warn them not to expect infallibility in themselves, or in you, or in any uninspired man, but to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is right;” and caution them against being led away, by bold assertions and arrogant pretensions, into those corruptions of Gospel truth which will always, from time to time, be found arising within

the Church. So shall they be enabled to “take up the serpents” they will meet with; and “if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.”

Take heed, then, my Brethren, to yourselves, and to the flock over which you are appointed overseers; watch, and remember ever the solemn warnings Paul has given us: and may you be enabled, like him, at the close of your ministry, to stand “pure from the blood of all men.”

NOTE A. TO PAGE 75.

Many also there are, I am convinced, in this country, and some in the Continental States, by whom the “infallibility of the Church” is understood in the same sense as the constitutional maxim that “the king can do no wrong;” by which every one understands, not that the sovereign is personally exempt from error, but that there is no *superior authority on earth* to which he is responsible, and to which appeal can be made against any exercise of his lawful prerogative; and that to establish any such authority would be to subvert the Constitution for no object; since it would be, after all, only setting up as supreme one fallible man or Body of men instead of another. In like manner, some probably consider it best that there should be, in religious matters, some one supreme authority on earth, which, though not really infallible, should be treated as if it were so; that is, that its decisions should be final and without appeal, and binding on all Christians. This, they conceive, is better than that interminable controversies, arising out of the differences of men’s private judgments, should be suffered to arise, and to continue unchecked. And, no doubt, peace and unanimity might be thus produced, though at the expense of truth,—I mean sincere conviction of truth,—and at the price of transferring to fallible man that devotion which is due to God only, if all Christians throughout the world would agree to acquiesce in this feigned infallibility. But, as it is, truth and genuine piety are sacrificed for the sake of an universal peace and agreement, which (as is subsequently pointed out) are not attained after all.

NOTE B. TO PAGE 86.

I am well aware that when the two claims,—that to universality, and that to exemption from dissension and from error,—are brought forward *in conjunction*, and it is undertaken to reconcile them with each other, it is usual to explain one or both of them in a sense different from the obvious and natural meaning of the words, so as to render the two claims compatible. Then it is that we are told that “Catholic” or “Universal” means only the religion of a considerable *majority* of professing Christians, or the religion the most *widely diffused* throughout Christendom: or we are told that the Universal Church means merely that which all professed Christians *ought* to belong to; and that adults of sound mind who have received Christian baptism, and deliberately profess Christianity, are not necessarily members of the Universal Church, or Christians at all.

And we are also told that exemption from dissension and from error belongs to those only who *submit* in all points to the decisions of the rulers of the Catholic Church. And doubtless if all mankind, or any number of men, would but come to a perfect agreement in *any* one religion,—be it *true* or *false*,—they could not but be exempt from religious dissension, and, if not from error, at least from anything that they themselves would account an error.

But surely this is to “keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope.” It is not in any such sense that the pretensions I have been speaking of are usually put forth, and naturally understood, when *taken separately*. And it is not under any such explanations as the above, that those pretensions are found so alluring and so satisfactory as, to a great number of persons, they are; but in the natural and ordinary sense of the words. The expression “Catholic,” or “Universal,” Church is naturally understood to denote that

which comprehends all Christians. And by the word Christians is understood those who acknowledge and professedly embrace the religion founded by Jesus Christ. And those who designate any of these as Heretics are so far from denying them the title of Christians (though unsound and perverted Christians), that they imply it; since Pagans or avowed Atheists are never reckoned Heretics.

I am not, be it observed, defending this use of the word "Christian" as the most *advisable* to be adopted, if we were framing a new language. It might, we will suppose, have been advisable so to define the term that no two Christian Sects or Churches should apply it to the same persons. I am simply stating a *fact* as to the actual sense conveyed by the word in our *existing language*. And that such is the sense conveyed by it, is as much a fact as that we actually call the ninth month of the year September, and the tenth October; though if we were remodelling our language, the impropriety of such names would be obvious.

And again, exemption from dissension and from error naturally conveys the idea, not of these evils being *condemned* by certain Authorities when they arise, but of their never arising at all.

And it is in these obvious and natural senses of the words that the above pretensions are, in general,—when taken separately,—put forth with boastful confidence, and prove so attractive and so consolatory to the minds of many, as to be at once admitted without any close scrutiny as to how far they are well-founded.

But when the two claims are brought into juxtaposition, and it is inquired how far they are *compatible*, then they are explained away in the manner above alluded to. The promise is made in one sense, and kept in the other.

I will take the liberty of subjoining an extract relating to this point from the Appendix to the second Essay on the Kingdom of Christ.

“ I have seen reproaches full of scornful exultation cast on Protestants for having recourse, when treating of the subject of Church-government, to reasonings drawn from general views of Human Nature, and to illustrations from secular affairs : and for calculating what are likely to be the decisions of a Synod so and so constituted, without adverting to the promises of Divine presence and protection to the Church, and without expressing confidence of providential interpositions to secure it from discord, error, and other evils.

“ This kind of language has, at the first glance, a plausible air ; and is well calculated,—one cannot but think, designed,—to impose on pious and well-intentioned, but ignorant, weak, and unreflecting minds among the multitude. But a sober examination will shew it to be either wholly irrelevant to the matter in hand, or else a mere groundless pretence.

“ It is indeed true that the Lord has promised to be with his People ‘ even unto the end of the world,’ and that ‘ the Gates of Hell’ (*i. e.* Death) ‘ shall not prevail against his Church ;’ that is, that Christianity shall never become extinct. And his ‘ Spirit which helpeth our infirmities’ will doubtless be granted to such as sincerely exert themselves in his cause : though not necessarily so as to crown those exertions with such complete success, as, we know, was not granted to the Apostles themselves. Our efforts, however, in that cause, whether He in his unsearchable wisdom shall see fit to make them a greater or a less benefit to others, will doubtless, as far as regards ourselves, be accepted by him. And a pious confidence in whatever God has really promised, Protestants do not fail to inculcate on suitable occasions.

“ But when the question is as to the probable results of such and such a procedure in a Synod, and as to the measures likely to be adopted by a Government so and so constituted, it would manifestly be irrelevant to dwell on those general promises of the divine blessing. If there were a question what means should be used to protect a certain district from

hurtful inundations, no one would think of cutting short the discussion by a reference to the promise made to Noah, that the whole Earth should never again be laid waste by a deluge. It is evident, therefore, that the reproaches I have alluded to must be understood as having reference to (that which alone is pertinent to the present question) confidence in a promise of supernatural interference to secure the Church for ever from strife, schism, and corruption.

“And certainly if we *had* received any such promise, all apprehensions, all calculations of probabilities,—all reasonings from the analogy of other human transactions, would be superseded; and we should have only to ‘stand still and see the salvation of God.’

“But every one, except the grossly ignorant and unthinking, must be well aware that no such promise has ever been *fulfilled*, and consequently (if the Scriptures are to be taken as a record of divine truth) that none such was ever *made*.

“We find the Apostle Paul declaring that ‘there must needs be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest;’ we find him labouring to repress the irregularities and party spirit, which even in his own time had crept into the Church of Corinth; and warning the Elders of Ephesus and Miletus to ‘take heed, because after his departure grievous wolves would enter into the fold.’ Corruptions in doctrine, disorders, dissension, and insubordination, are evils of which he is continually giving notice to his People as what they must be prepared to encounter.

“And when we look to the ecclesiastical history of subsequent Ages—exhibiting the sad spectacle of contests, almost equally dividing the Church, between the Arians, for instance, and the Athanasians, on points of doctrine, and between the Donatists and their opponents, on a question of ecclesiastical Polity,—besides the mutual anathemas of the Eastern and Western Churches, and besides all the cabals and intrigues, and secular motives, and evil passions, which have notoriously

found their way into Councils, and Conclaves, and ecclesiastical Courts—when we contemplate all this, we see but too well what reason the Apostle had for his warnings.

“But there is no need in the present case to resort to ancient history. The very existence of *Protestants* (to say nothing of the Greek Church) is sufficient to nullify, in respect of the Church of Rome at least, the notion of an exemption from error and from schism being promised to *that*, as to the Universal or Catholic Church. For the Church of Rome claims all professing Christians as properly belonging to it; considering Protestants as children, though disobedient children;—subjects, though revolted subjects. The very rise, therefore, and continued existence, of Protestantism, proves the non-existence in the Catholic Church (if the Church of Rome be supposed such) of any immunity from heresy and schism. And if it be attempted to avoid this conclusion by allowing that Protestants and members of the Greek Church are *not* to be regarded as in any way belonging to the Church of Rome, then the pretensions of that Church to be *the Catholic* (*i. e.* Universal) Church, must be given up.

“Whatever plausibility therefore there may appear at first sight in the pretensions, *separately* taken, of that Church, on the one hand to perfect purity of doctrine, and unity, and on the other hand to Universality, it is evident that both *conjointly* cannot be maintained with even any show of reason. Either the one or the other must be abandoned. If Protestants, and members of the Greek, the Armenian, and other Churches, do *not* belong to the Romish Church, it cannot be *Universal*; if (which is what its advocates actually maintain) all Christians do belong to it, then, it manifestly is not exempt from *divisions*, and contrariety of doctrine. It is in vain (as far as the present question is concerned) to urge that the doctrine and procedure of Protestants, &c., are *condemned* by the authorities of the Church of Rome, and by

all its *sound* members. For an *exemption* from a certain evil must consist, not, in its being *censured* when it arises, but in its *not arising* at all. Indeed it would be very easy,—and also quite nugatory,—for any Church whatever to set up the boast that its doctrines are received by all,—except those who dissent from them; and that all submit to its authority,—except those who refuse submission.

“The extraordinary Providence, therefore, which is boasted of as securing the true Church from division and from error, and which Protestants are reproached with not trusting to or claiming, has evidently no existence in the very Church to which those who utter the reproach belong. And one can hardly doubt that they must themselves be aware of this; and that when they speak, in a tone of exulting confidence, of the miraculous exemption of their Church from the inroads of false doctrine and dissension, they are only seeking to quiet the minds of the unthinking Vulgar with a delusive consolation.

“How far this kind of language may work an opposite effect on the minds of the more educated Classes,—how far the great prevalence of infidelity among those Classes on the Continent may be accounted for by their continually hearing (from those who, they will conclude, ought to know what their own Scriptures say) of *promises* having been made to the Church which, it is evident, as a matter of experience, have *not* been fulfilled, is an inquiry into which I will not now enter. My own conviction is, that every kind of pious fraud is as much at variance, ultimately, with sound policy, as it is with Christian principle.”

NOTE C. TO PAGE 86.

It is worth remarking, that a very great additional danger of infidelity exists in all those countries, in which it is an established principle that the profession of the religion which

the Government sanctions, may, and should be enforced by *coercive* means, and that it is the right and duty of the civil magistrate to prohibit and forcibly repress all departure from it. I do not doubt, indeed, that many persons are sincere believers in Christianity, who yet maintain this principle; but the principle itself,—besides being wholly at variance with the spirit of Christianity,—acts also as a kind of specific poison to sincere belief. Like a pestilential atmosphere, it makes gradual and imperceptible advances in debilitating the system, and tainting the inmost springs of life, more or less speedily according to the constitution of each individual; and carries off its victims one by one, without external blow, by a secret internal decay.

One mode in which this cause operates is, by destroying the support which each man's conviction ordinarily derives, and may fairly and reasonably derive, from that of his neighbours. For, whatever any one is *compelled* to profess, we cannot rationally feel sure that he does not inwardly disbelieve; since we know that if he does disbelieve it he dares not openly say so.

But it is in another way that the principle in question produces its most deleterious effects. In proportion as men are accustomed to regard it as right that outward profession should be enforced, they will come to consider this *profession* as everything, and inward belief,—which *cannot* be enforced,—as insignificant. *Conformity* will be regarded as the great object, and *truth* as a matter we need not be concerned about.

“The highest truth,” says Dr. Arnold, “if professed by one who believes it not in his heart, is, to him, a lie, and he sins greatly by professing it. Let us try as much as we will to convince our neighbours; but let us beware of influencing their conduct when we fail in influencing their convictions. He who bribes or frightens his neighbour into doing an act which no good man would do for reward or from fear, is

tempting his neighbour to sin ; he is assisting to lower and to harden his conscience,—to make him act for the favour and from the fear of man, instead of for the favour and from the fear of God ; and if this be a sin in him, it is a double sin in us to tempt him to do it.” And any one whose conscience has been thus lowered,—who has been so long habituated to this sin as to cease to consider it as a sin,—will have cast aside all thoughts of sincerity in religious profession, either in himself or in others ; and will regard it as even a duty (like the ancient heathen philosophers) to conform to the religion of his country for the sake of the public good.

It is mere trifling and evasion to pretend (as some have done) to qualify the principle, by saying that the Government is to enforce a *true* religion, and not any other ; since, of course, each Government will decide and proclaim that to be the true one, which it patronizes ; and from its decisions there is no appeal. If it has a *right*, then, to make and enforce these decrees,—if it be, as some express it, the duty of a Government to *provide* a true religion for the subjects, in the sense of deciding what religion they shall *be obliged*, under a penalty, to adhere to,—and if it be the *duty* of the subjects, as well as their interest, to acquiesce (as it must be if Government *have* this right ; since *right* and *duty* imply each other),—then, since different, and even opposite religions may be, and in fact are, in different Countries, thus enforced, all of which cannot be true, but all of which, each in its own Country, men are *bound* to profess, a complete disconnexion is thus effected between religious profession and truth. For it is utterly impossible, on the above principles, that there can be any *one* true religion revealed from heaven which it is the duty of every individual to adopt. All must be mere creatures of human legislation for the purposes of State policy.

And this, I suppose, was the meaning of a member of the Legislature, of some celebrity, who is reported to have said that he believed all religions to be true, and all equally true.

That they could, all and each, be really from Heaven, their palpable discrepancy renders clearly impossible ; and, therefore, if they are all on a level, it must follow that none of them is a real revelation. "All equally true" must have meant "all equally false." But all,—I suppose he meant,—are alike suited to keep the Vulgar in salutary awe, and to gratify a certain craving in their minds after some superhuman object of veneration.

This seems to be just that description of infidelity which the principle I have been speaking of,—that of compulsory conformity,—often actually produces, and always tends to generate and to foster. [See *Essays on the Difficulties of St. Paul's Writings*, &c., Appendix, note E.]

SERMON IV.
CHRISTIAN SAINTS,
AS DESCRIBED IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT*.

ROM. I. 1, 7.

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an
Apostle to all that be in Rome,
beloved of God, called [to be] Saints.*

THE opening addresses of the Apostolic Epistles contain more instruction, and more matter for useful meditation, than some readers of Scripture are aware. And, especially, the *titles* applied to the persons each Apostle is writing to, tend, incidentally, to throw much valuable light on the history, and on the whole

* This Sermon, delivered in St. Patrick's Cathedral, was published by the Additional-Curates'-Fund-Society for Ireland, in aid of their funds, by the permission of the Preacher.

character, of the Gospel dispensation. They indicate to us what were the ideas most familiar to the mind of the writer, and which he expected, or at least intended, to be the most habitually impressed on the mind of the reader. And this is more particularly the case in respect of any remarkable words or phrases that occur *frequently*, and are repeated in Epistles addressed to different and distant Churches. Appellations thus commonly employed, must, we may conclude, express something essential to the religion of the Gospel; and it is, therefore, most important to ascertain their true import, and full force.

Now in looking over the openings of the several Epistles of Paul, you will find that in the far greater part of them he applies the title of SAINTS to the persons he is addressing.

The Romans, and also the Corinthians, he addresses as “called saints* :” he applies the title of saints to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to the Ephesians: besides which, he

* The words “to be,” which were inserted by our translators, they have printed in italics, to denote that there is no corresponding word in the original.

several times uses the same title at the close of an Epistle, in reference to those whose remembrances he gives: "all the saints salute you."

With respect to his address to the Ephesians, "to the saints who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus," it is worth remarking that our translation might naturally lead the reader to suppose the Apostle to be addressing his Epistle to *two* distinct classes of persons:—"to the *saints* which are at Ephesus, and to the *faithful* in Christ Jesus." But the original will not bear that sense. The exact rendering would be, "to the saints (*i. e.* the holy), even the believers in Christ Jesus, who are at Ephesus." The word "faithful," I may observe, by the way, was used in the times when our translators wrote, in a sense which it has now lost, to signify "a believer." Thus, in one of the prayers at the close of the Communion-service, we read of "the blessed company of all faithful people;" and again, in the 19th Article, a Church is defined, "a congregation of faithful men:" meaning, evidently, in both places, "believers in Christ."

Who then were those Saints and Believers to

whom the Apostle addresses his Epistles? Manifestly, not certain persons of distinguished holiness, beyond the rest of the Christians; for he takes occasion to rebuke several of those he addresses, for their irregularities and grievous sins. It is plain that he uses the term as exactly equivalent to *Christians*:—as applying to all who had professed Christianity and been baptized into the Christian Church. And the same may be said of several other terms which are applied by him, and by the other sacred writers, to what we now call Christians. They are often addressed as the *Brethren*, the *Elect* [or chosen], the *Called*, and the *Disciples*. But it is very remarkable that amidst all this variety of appellations, they are never once addressed by that of Christians, which has been, for so many ages, their constant designation. Thrice only does the word occur in the New Testament; and never, as applied by Christians to one another. We find it mentioned, in Acts xi., as the title for the first time bestowed on the Disciples at Antioch: evidently, by the Romans, as the name is of Latin formation. Again, we find Agrippa saying to Paul, “Almost thou

persuadest me to be a Christian.” And lastly, we find the Apostle Peter adverting to it as the designation, among the unbelieving heathen rulers, of a *crime* for which the Believers suffered persecution. He exhorts them to take care that none of them suffer “as a murderer, a thief, or an evil-doer; but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.”

The title then, was, it appears, perfectly well known in the Apostolic age; and it was not held as a term of reproach among Christians; for they gloried in the name of Christ; but yet they never applied it, as we now do, to one another.

Now this fact (however it is to be accounted for, or whether we can account for it at all or not,) is one from which we may draw an important conclusion as to the *antiquity* of the books of the New Testament. Suppose these books had been, as some daring speculators have presumed to conjecture, not really composed in the apostolic age, by the persons whose names they bear, but compiled in the second, third, or fourth century, out of traditions afloat in the Church, and then fathered

upon the Apostles and Evangelists, by fraud, carelessness, and ignorance:—suppose this had been the case, how certain it is that we should have found in these books the word “*Christians*,” as commonly applied by Christians, to each other, as we know it was in those ages. For the word *is* thus employed by the writers of those ages, and of all subsequent times, whose works have come down to us, almost as commonly as in the present day. Any compiler, therefore, in those ages, making up a pretended original book out of floating traditions, would have been morally certain to apply the title “*Christians*,” whenever he had occasion, just as he and all those around him had been accustomed to do.

We have here, therefore, a complete refutation of that rash conjecture I have been alluding to. The absence, throughout all the New Testament writings, of the word “*Christian*,” as applied by Christians to each other, alone furnishes, even to a plain unlearned reader, a complete proof of the antiquity of those writings.

And the anxiety of infidels to disprove that

antiquity shews plainly how they despair of contending, in any other way, against their *truth*. Such accounts as these books contain of a multitude of wonderful events, could never possibly (if false) have been circulated without detection, *at the very time* when those events are described as occurring.

As for the cause why the Apostles did not apply to their converts the title of Christians, even if we should be unable to offer any conjecture as to that, the argument for the antiquity of the New Testament remains (as I have said) untouched. Be the cause what it may, the fact is certain, that shortly after the apostolic age, and from thence downwards, to the present day, all Christian writers have applied the title of Christians, just as we do now; and that it never is so applied in any of twenty-seven books of the New Testament; which, consequently, must have been written in the very days of the Apostles. But I think we may perceive, on attentive examination, what the cause was of this procedure of the Apostles.

The name of Christians came into use (as I have said) first, at Antioch in Syria; where a

Church was founded, consisting, in a great measure, of Gentile converts, whose admission into the Gospel covenant had just before been announced to the Apostle Peter. And this it was that seems to have occasioned the name to arise. In the previous period of the Church,—for about the first seven years,—the Disciples being all Jews, the Romans were not likely to think it worth while to give them any other appellation than “*Jews*.” They did not trouble themselves about the different religious sects of a people they despised*. But when they found a large and increasing body of men who consisted of both Jews and *Gentiles*, it became necessary to distinguish them by some name; and, naturally enough, they called them after their leader, Christ: which, though not his proper *name*, but his *title*, the Romans probably mistook for his name. I have already observed that the word Christian is of Latin formation, and must therefore have been coined by the Romans. But the same thing will appear, also, from the impossibility of its having

* See Dr. Hinds’ History of the Rise of Christianity.

originated with any other class of men. The Christians themselves certainly could not have been its inventors, since, as we have seen, they never used it. And the unbelieving Jews would never have employed a title which condemned themselves, by implying that *Jesus of Nazareth* was indeed *the Christ*. To have called his disciples Christians, (i. e. followers of the Christ,) would have been to acknowledge Him as the Christ; which was the very point the unbelieving Jews would not admit. They accordingly called his disciples Nazarenes; as you may see in Acts xxiv., where Paul is denounced as “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,” and this is the appellation which, down to this day, they prefer applying to us.

Since, therefore, the title of Christian could not have been introduced, either by the Christians themselves, or by the unbelieving Jews, it remains that it must have originated with the unconverted Gentiles; viz., the Romans; who found it requisite, for the first time, to give a name to a class of men comprehending both Jews by nation and Gentiles.

Now the admission of the Gentiles into the

Church, (which is what gave occasion for the origin of the title of "*Christian*"), was, as you may plainly see in the narrative of the Book of Acts, and in the Epistles, the most wonderful and unexpected event to all parties in that age, and the one which was the most revolting to Jewish prejudices. No point of faith did they hold more pertinaciously, (as, indeed, the unbelieving Jews do to this day,) than that the Law of Moses, as originally delivered, was to remain in full force to the end of the world. And the promised Christ [or Messiah] they looked for as the deliverer of the Israelites by birth, together with such proselytes as should have made themselves a portion of God's People Israel, by embracing the whole Levitical Law. That the unclean and despised Gentiles should be admitted to equal privileges with the Jews, and that, without conforming to the Levitical Law, was so abhorrent to all their prejudices, that (as you may see in Acts x. and xi.) the Apostles themselves had very great difficulty in admitting it; and, afterwards, (as you may see in Acts xv., and in the Epistle to the Galatians,) a great struggle

was made, to confine, at least the highest privileges of the Gospel, to Jews and those proselytes who should have completely embraced Judaism.

The sufferings and death of the Christ, whom they had looked for as a mighty temporal deliverer; and again, the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles to a complete equality with believing Jews: these were the two chief stumbling-blocks to the greater part of the Jewish nation. All their hopes, and expectations, and interpretations of prophecy, were utterly at variance with such a Gospel as this. And we cannot doubt that the objection constantly in their mouths would be, that such a Gospel implied a *change of purpose* in the Most High; —that the Christian preachers represented Him as having violated his promises to the Israelites, and introduced a *new* religion, at variance with the original Dispensation.

Accordingly, we find the Apostle Paul meeting this objection by continually referring to the prophecies, to show that the Lord Jesus had (as He Himself expresses it) “come not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil

them ;”—that the prophecies,—though they had not been so understood,—did really point both to a *suffering* Messiah, and at the call of the Gentiles “to be fellow-heirs” of the promises ; being (as Peter expresses it) “elect according to the foreknowledge of God ;” i.e. all along designed by Him to be enrolled among his Elect [or chosen] people. And this is what Paul speaks of as “the *mystery* of the Gospel ; which had been hidden from the foundation of the world, but now is made manifest.” And, in his speech before Agrippa, he gives a summary of his preaching : that he taught “none other things than what Moses and the Prophets did say should be ; that the Christ should *suffer*,” (this was one of the two great stumbling-blocks), “and should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the People,” (i.e. God’s People, Israel,) “and to the *Gentiles* :” this was the other great stumbling-block. And it was accordingly his being the chief Apostle of the *Gentiles* that exposed him to so much bitterer persecution than the rest. In support of these doctrines, he appeals to the Prophets : “King Agrippa, believest

thou the Prophets?") maintaining that the Gospel is no new religion, opposed to the Old Dispensation, but an enlargement and completion of the Old; not a destroying, but a fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets.

Now in order to impress this the more fully on the minds of the Disciples, who were continually in danger of being misled by Judaizing teachers, nothing can be more natural than that the Apostles should have taken the precaution, which we find, in point of fact, they do take, of abstaining from the use of any *new* title, such as that of Christians, and confining themselves altogether to those titles which were *applied to God's People of old*. We find, in the Old Testament, the Israelites perpetually called "Brethren," as being literally children of Israel after the flesh; they are also designated the "Called," and "Chosen," [or "Elect,"] People of God; not as being predestinated absolutely to obtain His favour, but as being selected for certain high *privileges and advantages*, through which they might, if they failed not on their part, obtain extraordinary favour. And they are also called a *holy* people, i. e.

Saints, not as denoting that they personally excelled in holiness of character; but in the same sense in which certain *places* were called “holy,” *dedicated*, and set apart, to God’s service. All these titles accordingly, the Apostles applied to Christians of whatever nation; to point out to them that all are now alike admitted to the privileges of the ancient Church [or Congregation, as the word is rendered in our version of the Old Testament] of Israel; only, with great additional ones; all being “*brethren*,” as being God’s adopted children: (“as many as received Him,” says the Evangelist John, “to them gave He power to become the Sons of God,”) all being God’s “Elect [or ‘Chosen,’] people;” all being Saints, or “Holy,” in the sense of being solemnly dedicated to His service, as the Israelites had been of old; and all being (as Paul calls them, in Galatians) “the Israel of God.” “If,” says he, “ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s Seed, and heirs according to the promise.” “Ye are,” says Peter, “a chosen generation, [the word is the same which is elsewhere rendered by our translators ‘Elect,’] a royal priesthood,

a holy nation, [the word here rendered ‘holy,’ is the same which is elsewhere translated ‘Saints,’] which before were not a People, but now are the People of God.”

Such, I have no doubt, was the reason of the Apostles for confining themselves to these names, instead of employing that of Christians. And this will explain also why, when these reasons had no longer the same force, these names became less employed, and that of “*Christian*” came gradually into ordinary use. When Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed, and the Jewish nation was dispersed, and the far greater number of Christians were Gentiles, the danger of Judaizing teachers, which in Paul’s time was so great, seems almost to have died away; and Christians seem to have felt, (whether rightly or wrongly), that there was no longer any need of reminding them of what was now become so familiar to them, though originally a great paradox, that men of all nations had succeeded to the full privileges which had originally been confined to the Jews, and were all admitted alike to be God’s people. And hence, immediately after the age of the

Apostles, the term Christians gradually began to come into use among themselves, as it remains down to this day.

In conformity with what I have been saying, you will observe that Paul constantly uses these appellations, not as implying that his hearers *had* attained superior Christian excellence, but as suggesting a *motive* for their exerting themselves to attain it. He never tells any of them to expect any “*call*,” but addresses them all as “called Saints,” and exhorts them to “*walk worthy* of the vocation whereto they are called.” He never speaks of their *becoming* elect, but exhorts them (Col. iii. 12) “*as* the elect of God, holy, [or Saints], to put on mercy, kindness, and humbleness,” and to “give diligence to make their calling and election sure.” Never does he exhort them to *be* Saints*, but to “walk as *becometh* Saints;” never, to *enter into* any brotherhood, but “to *love as* brethren.”

* The Apostle Peter in one passage uses the word *αγιοι* [“holy” or “Saints”] in the sense of that personal holiness of life to which he exhorts his hearers to aim. There may perhaps be one or two other instances of its being so employed by the sacred writers; but the other sense—the one above described—is undoubtedly the ordinary one.

The titles, in short, which he applies, all denote their *privileges* and their *duties*; not their good *use* of those privileges, and faithful *performance* of those duties. It is to that use and that performance that he *exhorts* them. And he warns them (*e.g.* 1 Cor. x.), from the example of God's people of old, against neglecting or abusing their high privileges. All the Israelites were God's "Chosen" [or Elect], but "with most of them* God was not well pleased," as was shown by their being overthrown in the wilderness.—"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

It has happened, I think unfortunately, that in adopting the designation of "*Christians*" (to which there can be no objection) we have, at the same time, changed in a great degree the signification of the term "*Saints*." It is now generally used to denote, not all Christians,—all who have been dedicated to Christ in baptism,—but some particular Christians distinguished from the rest, either as having received the gift of inspiration,—as we speak

* ΤΟΙΣ ΠΛΕΙΟΣΙΝ.

of *Saint* Matthew, *Saint* Mark, *Saint* Paul, and the rest of the Apostles and Evangelists,—or else as being supposed to possess an extraordinary degree or kind of personal holiness, beyond what is expected of ordinary Christians. These notions have, in their most exaggerated form, led to the practice which unhappily prevails, and has for many ages prevailed, among a very large portion of the Christian world, of invoking deceased Saints, and begging their intercession with the Most High; thus conferring on his creatures the attribute of omnipresence—each of these Saints being supposed to be able to hear the invocations of millions of votaries in many thousand different parts of the world, who are addressing him at the same time!

But even those who have kept clear of this error are yet often found attributing to those whom they designate “Saints,” such a degree and kind of personal holiness as is far from being required or expected of Christians in general, and which it would be most extravagant for them to aim at or hope for.

One may often, accordingly, hear persons

professing to have no pretensions to be considered as *Saints*, or thought of ever becoming such; though at the same time they would be indignant at not being considered as *Christians*. And yet the Apostles, as we have seen, always used the word Saints as equivalent to what we mean by Christians.

What would have been, think you, the astonishment of Paul, could he now return to the earth, at hearing professed believers in Christ disavowing all claim to the title of "Saint"? This horror and astonishment would indeed be much diminished when he came to understand that we use the word in a very different sense from his. But without denying our right to make such a change, I cannot but think he would have questioned the wisdom of doing so in this instance. Evangelists, and Prophets, and Apostles, I think he would consider as best distinguished by the very titles of "Evangelist" and "Prophet" and "Apostle," rather than by that of "Saint," which in Scripture is applied to every one of God's People—to every member of what is called in the oldest of the Creeds, "the Holy Catholic Church, the

Communion of Saints.” For the saintship of the Apostles and Evangelists consisted (according to the language of Scripture) not in what was peculiar to *them*, but in what was common to them with others; not in their inspiration and other miraculous gifts, but in those gifts offered to Christians generally, which are of incomparably higher value. And of this, at least, I cannot doubt; that Paul would earnestly warn us against being misled by our own use of language;—against falling into confusion of thought, and into serious error respecting *things*, through the careless employment of *words*. Most earnestly, we may be assured, would he warn us that Christianity is not two religions,—one for ordinary men, and another for Saints,—but one single religion, designed for all men alike, and not setting up several different standards of personal holiness for different persons. He would warn us against being led to imagine that there are among the number of Christians certain classes or parties, or orders of men, of whom a Christian life—a conformity of character to the Gospel-precepts—is *more* required, or is *less* required,

than of the generality. “ They that are Christ’s (says this Apostle) have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” “ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” He speaks not, you observe, of what can be done, and is required to be done, by certain pre-eminent Saints, but of “ *any man*” who has enlisted at baptism under the banner of Christ crucified. In the sense in which Paul accounted himself a Saint, in that sense he calls all Christians Saints.

As for the saintship which consists in the possession of inspiration from Heaven, or of any other miraculous gifts, great is the mistake of imagining that such gifts render the possessor necessarily acceptable in God’s sight, and are to be regarded as a *substitute* for moral holiness of character; or again, that these supernatural gifts necessarily *ensure* personal holiness; or again, that the *absence* of such gifts renders a less degree of personal holiness sufficient. God enabled some to speak in new languages; of them it was required that they should use the gift to his glory, and the good

of their fellow-creatures, in preaching the Gospel throughout the world. To others was “given the gift of healing, by the same Spirit;” it was *their* task to heal the sick accordingly. To others is given *only* the knowledge of the Gospel, and the promise of Divine aid to help their infirmities, and to enable them to conform their own heart and life to the precepts and example of their Lord: and these also are required thus to conform, and to make the best use of their own advantages. Nowhere are we told that a less degree of Christian virtue is requisite in one who does not possess miraculous endowments. For, these endowments were designed, not for the benefit of the possessor, but of his neighbours. Miracles were the instruments the Lord employed for the propagation of his Gospel among all nations; that men might glorify, not the man who exercised such superhuman powers, but God. The inspired preachers and writers were inspired for the purpose of instructing *us* in the Gospel of their Divine Master.

But would it not be presumptuous for any one of *us* in these days to pretend to be as

good a Christian as Paul or Peter, or any other of those we call emphatically “Saints”?

Presumptuous indeed it would be to *pretend* to a high degree of Christian excellence—to “count oneself to *have* apprehended:” but to *aim* at attaining that excellence, through divine assistance, is so far from being presumptuous, that there is more presumption in cherishing a hope of God’s favour without it. It would indeed be a most impious presumption for one of us to pretend to inspiration; because we have it not. It would be presumptuous for one of us to expect to be as eminent an instrument in propagating the Gospel among all nations as the Apostle Paul; because we are not so qualified by miraculous gifts as he was. But we are *not* less enabled, or less bound, each one of us, himself to perform his own Christian duties—to lead a Christian life, and to have a Christian heart; and in short (as Paul expresses it) to “walk as becometh Saints,” than the Apostles themselves. And there is great and dangerous presumption in the false humility of hoping for acceptance with our Great Master while we lower our own standard

of personal Christian holiness, and claim an exemption from the duty of aiming at the highest degree of Christian moral excellence, on the ground that we are not gifted with miraculous powers.

These powers were given, as I have said, not for the benefit of the possessors, but of others, for *their* conviction and instruction. And the possession of these miraculous gifts neither *proved* any one to be personally pure and holy in heart, nor necessarily *made* him such. Judas Iscariot, we should remember, exercised, in common with the other Apostles, miraculous powers, during our Lord's abode on earth. Many of the Corinthians, again, are severely rebuked by Paul for their strange abuse of some of their miraculous gifts. The Lord Jesus himself speaks of his finally disowning, as "workers of iniquity," some who should have "done many mighty works in his name." And Paul speaks strongly of his own sedulous care as to his own life, "lest by any means after having preached to others, he should himself become a castaway."

Let no one therefore suppose either that

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more, or that *less*, of Christian virtue is requisite for an Apostle or Prophet than for an uninspired Christian. Both alike are, in the scriptural sense of the word, "Saints;" and both alike are enabled, and therefore required, to "walk as becometh Saints." Whether a man have received heavenly light by immediate personal inspiration, or through the words of an inspired Evangelist, in either case he *has* been blessed with that light, and both are required to live "as children of the light." Those who have no power to cast out evil spirits from the possessed, are yet enabled and required to cast them out from themselves—to "resist the Devil, and he will flee from them." Those who have no miraculous gifts of healing the sick and cleansing the leprous, are yet empowered, and therefore expected, to apply to the Great Physician of Souls for the cure of their own spiritual diseases, and to "purify themselves even as He is pure." And those who have not the gift of tongues, are yet called on to do their best towards diffusing the knowledge and practice of the Gospel-religion among all who do lie within their reach.

That valuable Institution, the members of which are now assembled, and for which we are anxious to obtain a more general and active support from the Public, is so constituted as to enable all, whether Clergy or Laymen, to take some share—a share which they must rejoice to take, if they are Christians in any thing but in name—in the great work of promoting the coming of Christ's kingdom, and the doing of "His will on earth as in heaven," which they daily pray for. By contributing towards the support of Ministers in places where their services are much needed, and cannot without such contributions be obtained,—by thus preserving multitudes of our brethren from spiritual destitution, from gross religious ignorance, from pernicious error, from irreligion, and from sin,—the Laity as well as the Clergy may have a share in forwarding the great work for which their Saviour lived and died.

Is there any Layman of our Church who is disposed to say in his heart—"This is a valuable Institution, and one to which the *Clergy* ought to contribute liberally; it is a holy and

an important work, and one which ought to excite great interest among the *Clergy*; but religious matters are more properly *their* concern, Laymen cannot be expected to take any particular interest in the propagation of religion?"

I dwelt in the beginning of this discourse on the error of regarding Christianity as *two* religions—one for ordinary Christians, and another for "Saints"—for the "Elect"—for "God's People,"—or some particular class, party, or order of men. I dwelt, I say, on that error in especial reference to this occasion, because the prevalence of the error and its evil consequences are in no point more observable than in what relates to the distinction between the Clergy and the Laity. That there is a distinction of *offices* between the two is undeniable; but so far forth as they are Christians—i. e. (in the apostolic sense of the word) *Saints*, there is no distinction. And yet does it not often happen that such actions and such habits of life as are clearly at variance, not with the *ministerial* character only, but with the *Christian* character, are, by the world in general, thought very

lightly of in a Layman, though in a Clergyman they would be severely censured? Is it not notorious that many duties which, if the teaching of Christ and the Apostles is to be received, are not merely *clerical* duties but *Gospel* duties, are either wholly neglected, or very little attended to, by such as have not taken *holy orders*? And this temper of mind is found not least in many of those who are among the most rigid in their demands of an exemplary performance of Christian duties by the Clergy. It is commonly (and very truly) said, that the Clergy ought to be men of *exemplary life*; i. e. a life which sets a good *example* to their people: but it is remarkable that this truth is by none more earnestly dwelt on than by some of those who seem never even to think of being bound to *follow* that example, by leading the same sort of life *themselves*. Now if they really hope for salvation by means of their *pastor's* good conduct,—by *his* practice of Christian virtue in their stead,—they ought at least to be consistent in their language, and to call it, not *exemplary* virtue, but *vicarious* virtue.

But to pass over the case of those who tole-

rate in themselves unchristian habits, or who neglect Christian duties, generally, and to confine myself to one branch of Christian duty, that of labouring to spread among all, and especially among our brethren, the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion, what do we find—and what ought we to find—among the lay-members of our Church? Most true it is, that a Layman is not justified in taking on himself any that are exclusively ministerial functions—in intruding himself into what are strictly clerical offices. I only wish each one who hears me to consider how far, and in what way, *without* any such intrusion, it is *possible*, and *consequently* a *duty*, for him to assist towards promoting that coming of Christ's kingdom which he is accustomed to pray for; and next, to consider how far he is himself performing that duty.

We all know that it is the proper office of the Ministers of our Church to lead the devotions of the congregation according to the Prayer-book, and to administer the Sacraments to them, and publicly to preach and expound to them the Scriptures. Is it also their sole,

or their especial office to bear all the expenses of every institution for the diffusion of Christian knowledge and practice? Can delicate scruples, and conscientious dread of unduly intruding into the ministerial office, hold back any one from contributing towards *such* an object? Can he think that indifference in such a cause, though unbecoming the *profession* of a *Clergyman*, is consistent with the profession of a *Christian*?—that the Clergy may be expected to feel a great interest in such matters; but that it is hardly to be looked for in the Laity?

If there be any who entertain *these* sentiments, I would ask such a one what he would think of our doctrine, if we were to teach that the highest glories of Heaven are reserved for the Clergy exclusively; that the souls of Laymen are of comparatively small account in their Redeemer's sight; and that the best Christians must be content with a very humble and inferior place in the mansions of eternal bliss, unless they have been admitted to holy Orders? How great would be the indignation at such a groundless and arrogant assumption

on our part, that would be felt and expressed by all;—by all, including all those who are content to forego all pretensions to an equal share in Christian *zeal*, in Gospel *duties*—though not to forego their equal claim to Christian *hopes*, to Gospel *promises*, to heavenly happiness!

Let any one of you, my Christian friends, who does feel that gratitude and love to his Saviour—that high value for the blessing of Gospel-light, which prompts him to seek how he may *do* something to manifest his sense of mercies received—let any such person behold in this Society an opportunity of promoting “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;” not merely worldly peace, but heavenly, and divine good-will towards men.

But if, again, any one feels conscious within his own heart, that his Christian gratitude, and love, and zeal, fall lamentably short of what he knows he *ought* to feel; and if he sincerely desires to kindle into warmth those sentiments which are but coldly alive within him; let him behold here one of the best exercises by which

to foster and strengthen those sentiments. For as we may observe in all departments of life, actively befriending any one increases our regard for him; actively serving our country strengthens the feeling of patriotism; activity in the service of a party strengthens party-spirit; and so of the rest. A cause in which we have exerted ourselves becomes more and more endeared to us through those very efforts. Act therefore as you *would* spontaneously and gladly act if you *had* those Christian feelings, and that Christian zeal which you know the Christian *ought* to have, and which you wish to generate and encourage in your own breast; and the very outward acts themselves, coupled with earnest petitions for Divine Grace, will produce, and strengthen, and keep up that very disposition of which such acts are the natural fruit.

I know indeed that the severe pressure of that awful visitation of famine which has fallen on this land, renders it doubly difficult at the present time to support any institution which, like this, depends on voluntary contributions. But I would remind any one who may be

disposed to make this a plea for withholding contributions from this Society, to consider that this pressure has fallen with most especial severity on the Clergy ; whose means, generally speaking, are very slender, and whose charities have often more than exhausted their means ; so that there is more need than ever for aid from the Laity to support any important institution which, if left to the unassisted efforts of the Clergy, must finally become extinct. But independently of this consideration, I would remind you, that to regard bodily wants and sufferings as alone calling for charitable relief, and to pay little or no attention to spiritual wants—to diseases of the soul—to the needs of those who may, or who should “hunger and thirst after righteousness”—would be quite at variance with the principles of the Gospel, and with the precepts and the example of its Author. He fed the hungry indeed, and healed the sick ; but his *main* object was to teach men to know and to do the will of their Heavenly Father. He exhorted his hearers to “labour not so much for the meat that perisheth,” as for that “which endureth unto ever-

lasting life ;” and “to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” in preference to taking anxious thought what they should eat and drink ; and He taught us, in His own form of prayer, *before* we ask for our “daily bread,” to pray that his “kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

If you are in earnest when you utter those words, your actions must be of a piece with your prayers. Endeavour therefore to make known as widely as possible the existence, and the real character, and the strong claims to support, of this Society ; and strive to induce your friends and neighbours—most especially by setting them the *example*—to contribute liberally, according to their ability, to its very scanty funds. Exhort those who are rich to give bountifully, and those whose means are small to remember that He who commended the widow’s mite has taught us not to be ashamed to give a little, if we give not grudgingly but gladly ; since “it is a cheerful giver that God loveth.”

And pray therefore that He will implant in you and in your brethren a grateful, a liberal,

and a Christian heart. Pray also that He will be pleased to bless our efforts in His holy cause ; and that at least that cause may not suffer through any remissness on your part ;—through any preference, in you, of the perishable riches of this world, to the “treasure which neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.”

THE END.

fer through any remissness on your part;—through any preference, in you, of the perishable riches of this world, to the ‘treasure which neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.’

This Sermon and the following, having been inserted in the present edition, a few copies have been struck off separate, for the convenience of purchasers of the former editions.

SERMON XX.

ROM. VIII. 32.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not, with Him, also freely give us all things ?

THE Apostle is here offering a topic of consolation and encouragement to Christians, drawn from the consideration of what God has already done for us. That He has—as the Lord Jesus had long before declared—‘so loved the world that He gave us his only-begotten Son,’—this is urged by the Apostle as a proof of his loving-kindness and care, and a reason for trusting Him throughout.

It is an encouragement which is addressed, as I have said, to *Christians*. For, those whom Paul writes to in this, and in all his other Epistles, were persons who had already embraced the Gospel. Such, indeed, (it is important to observe,) is the character of the whole of the New Testament. Every one of the books of it was written to, and for, Christians. And accordingly in no part of it is there any attempt to prove the truth of the Gospel-revelation. It does indeed supply, incidentally, abundant *materials* for evidence of this; but nothing is brought forward *as* evidence. *That* would manifestly have been superfluous, in any thing designed for those who had already become Christians, and had become so,

not, like us, from having been born and educated in a christian country, but who had enrolled themselves under Christ's banner, in contradiction to all their early prejudices,—in opposition often, to the entreaties of their friends, and to the threats of opponents,—in defiance often, of persecution and ridicule, and various other difficulties. To such persons, any arguments tending to prove what they so strongly believed already, would have been manifestly out of place.

There was a notorious infidel writer of the last century, who said of Paul's Epistles, that the Author, whoever he was, 'attempts to establish his religion by argument.' Any man of common sense must perceive that no such attempt is made, and that the Epistles are all addressed to believers in the religion. Paul does, indeed often resort to argument; but it is always argument to establish some particular point of doctrine, or to refute, or to guard against, some particular error. The main fact of the divine authority of the Gospel-revelation, he, of course, all along presupposes and takes for granted. That Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Saviour of the World, and that He voluntarily underwent sufferings and death for Man's sake, is what the Apostle frequently alludes to, and earnestly dwells on, not as any thing requiring to be *proved* to his readers, but as a truth already fully admitted by them, and the foundation of their religion.

And certainly, according, at least, to the most simple, natural, and obvious sense of his words, he teaches not less strongly that the death of Jesus Christ was something more than a mere *martyrdom*, and Christ Himself something more than a mere heaven-sent *Teacher*, and that his death had the character of an atoning *sacrifice*.

Thus much is revealed to us for our comfort and encouragement.

It is important however to consider not only what it is that Paul and the other Sacred Writers do teach, but also what they do *not* teach. For to overlook anything that Scripture does reveal to us, is not at all a greater or a more hurtful error, than to imagine something revealed which is not, and to accept, as on divine authority, what is in reality mere human conjecture.

I. First then, we should observe and keep in mind, that Scripture does not explain to us the *existence of evil*. Many evils are alluded to in Scripture; and remedies, and modes of escape are pointed out to us. And after all, a sick man is more indebted to the Physician who points out to him a *remedy* for his disorder, than to one who gives him a scientific description of the cause of it. But *why* it is that any such thing as evil should be permitted to exist,—this great difficulty, which has perplexed successive generations of Philosophers and Divines,—the Sacred Writers do not teach us, and human Reason, in our present state, is quite unable to explain. All the attempts that have been made, from time to time, by rash speculators, have proved nothing but the weakness and presumption of the authors; besides having, in some instances, brought most undeserved censure upon the Scriptures themselves; which have been represented as undertaking,—and failing,—to teach what in truth they never do undertake at all.

II. In the next place, it is important to remember that the Scriptures do not inform us *why* the sufferings and death of the Christ were necessary for Man's salvation, and *how* his sacrifice operates to effect this. Some bold speculators do undertake to explain all this. And it seems not to have occurred to them or to their admirers, that these men are in reality setting up themselves as

knowing more than the Evangelists and Apostles ; or at least, more than these were commissioned to reveal to Mankind.

And I cannot doubt that the rejection by some persons of doctrines which Scripture (whose authority they acknowledge) does seem very plainly to declare, has been greatly encouraged, and in many instances originally caused, by unwise and presumptuous endeavours to explain what Scripture has left obscure, and to confirm what is there revealed, by reconciling it with theories of Man's devising. For, when objections which will at least be thought by many to be unanswerable, are brought against any such theory, it is then too late to resort to the plea that 'divine mysteries are beyond the reach of our understanding,' and that we 'must not venture to try them by the standard of human Reason.' Every one who brings forward a *theory* of his own, does in fact appeal to human Reason, and binds himself to make his explanations intelligible and satisfactory. And if he fails of this, the result will too often be that the doctrine itself which he has been trying to elucidate and support by his explanations, will be supposed by many persons to be *dependent* on those explanations, and will be rejected along with the untenable theory. Blamable as those may be who draw such a conclusion, those are not free from blame who lead them to it, and thus place a stumbling-block in the way of a weak brother. The damage which the cause of our Religion, or any other good cause, can receive from the ablest adversaries, is very small, compared with what it may suffer from unwise advocates.

It is the wisest and safest course therefore,—as well as the most truly modest and humble,—to confine ourselves, in these matters, to the express declarations of the Sacred Writers themselves. I would warn you, my christian friends, against listening to any one who ventures to go

beyond these;—who presents you with *developments* (as they are sometimes called) that are to fill up the omissions of Scripture. An humble unlearned Christian, of ordinary common-sense, may understand that he is guilty of no arrogance in rejecting any such teacher, however learned and ingenious, and that he is bound so to do.

None more learned or more ingenious are you likely to meet with than the illustrious Bishop Butler; who thus expresses himself on this subject. ‘Some have endeavoured to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what Scripture has authorized: others, probably because they could *not* explain it, have been for *taking it away*, and confining his office of Redeemer of the World, to his instruction, example, and government of the Church; whereas the doctrine of the Gospel appears to be, not only that He *taught* the efficacy of repentance, but *rendered* it of the efficacy that it is, by what He did and suffered for us. And it is our Wisdom, thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions on which it is offered, on *our* part, without disputing how it was procured, on his.’

Such is the sober statement of that great Theologian in his ‘Analogy.’ He guards us against falling into the sin and folly of our first Parents; who when freely permitted to eat of the *Tree of Life*, turned aside to the Tree of forbidden *knowledge*. He was one who aimed at knowing *no less*, and was content to know *no more*, of divine mysteries, inscrutable to Man’s Reason, than the Inspired Writers tell us. And he shunned the error of those presumptuous speculators who, when the illumination from Heaven—the rays of Revelation—fail to shed such full light as they wish for, on the Gospel-dispensation, are for bringing to the Dial-plate, the lamp of human philosophy, which throws the shadow whichever way they will. He acted on the just maxim of the

learned Scaliger, that 'it is a wise ignorance to be contented with *not* knowing what the best of Masters thinks not fit to teach.'*

And it is important that we should clearly perceive how much *allied* are the two opposite errors alluded to by Butler. It is a similar want of humble faith that leads the one party to reject what they find it impossible to explain, and the other, to resolve to find an explanation of whatever they admit. These latter, even if their explanations were really as satisfactory as *they* perhaps think them, and if they did possess some knowledge beyond that of the Apostles,—or beyond, at least, what the Apostles have imparted to us,—yet could not, on that ground, claim the virtue of *faith*. For, faith, it is plain, must be measured rather by our ignorance than by our knowledge. *Some* knowledge, indeed, there must be, as a *foundation* for any reasonable faith to rest on; but the province of the faith *itself*,—distinct from the basis on which it is built,—must be, that which we do *not* clearly understand. For, 'faith is the evidence of things *not seen*.' There can be no exercise of faith in assenting to truths that are plainly demonstrated to our Reason, or in obeying commands whose reasonableness is clearly perceived. Faith, as distinguished from blind credulity, is shown in taking the word of another whom we have good reason to rely on, for something that we do *not* clearly see, or fully understand. Any one who, in a dark night at sea, believes, on the word of the Pilot and the sailors, that the haven is near at hand, shows more faith in them, than others who fancy that they see the land before them. He may be convinced that these others are deceiving themselves, and are gazing on a fog-bank which they mis-

* 'Nescire velle quæ Magister optimus
Docere non vult, erudita inicitia est.'

take for land : but at any rate they cannot claim superior, or equal, faith to his.

In order, however, to obtain such full instruction as we ought from the passage of Scripture now before us, it is necessary to keep in mind that our present condition in this world corresponds, in a great degree (as we are often reminded in our Scriptures) to that of *children*. We stand in somewhat a like relation both to our Heavenly Father (though, of course, immeasurably further removed from Him than any child from an earthly parent) and also to what we may become hereafter. 'When I was a child,' says the Apostle Paul, 'I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I understood as a child ; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' 'We now see by means of a mirror, darkly, but then, face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'

When, then, on the one hand, presumptuous objections are brought against the received accounts, of the fall of Man, for instance,—of the Redemption by Jesus Christ,—of a future Judgment,—and every part of the divine dispensations ; and when, on the other hand, explanations no less presumptuous, of the same, are offered,—let him who would derive wisdom from the source which God has pointed out, instead of listening to such objections, or to such answers, occupy himself in reflecting on the absurd mistakes which children commit, when they imagine themselves to have a full and correct notion of any thing that has been partially explained to them, and allow themselves to fancy (as soon as any glimmering knowledge has been afforded them) that they understand completely the transactions and situations of grown persons.

And if you would attain the best idea Man is capable of forming, on that most important point, the nature and extent of your own ignorance,—seek it by analogy, and

have recourse to a child for your instructor. Endeavour to convey to a very young child as full and correct a notion as possible, of civil government, and legal institutions,—of commercial transactions, and of various Arts and Sciences,—of the past History, and present condition of various nations; and then carefully observe how utterly *unintelligible* many points will remain to the infant-mind, after all the explanations that can be given,—how *uninteresting* many subjects will prove, which hereafter will be regarded as the most important;—how imperfect and inadequate will be the notions that are formed on others; and what strange mistakes will be perpetually arising: especially if the child, through presumptuous self-conceit, is not aware of his own incompetency to judge, and does not perceive when he is out of his depth.

And then, let the instructor apply the lesson to himself. Let him learn, from the example of the child, what is likely to be the imperfection of his own knowledge and of his own faculties. And let him no longer presume that he understands, or can expect to discover, the whole,—or even the greatest and most essential part,—of any of the divine dispensations, merely because *some* part has been declared; nor flatter himself that because he is well-assured of the truth of *something*, therefore there is nothing that is concealed from him.

‘We can seldom review,’ says the celebrated Dr. Paley, ‘what passed in our minds when we were children, without being surprised at the odd and extravagant notions which we took up and entertained,—how wildly we accounted for some things, and what strange forms we assigned to many other things,—what improbable resemblances we supposed,—what unlikely effects were expected,—what consequences we feared. I can easily believe that many of the opinions and notions we now erroneously entertain,—especially concerning the place,

condition, nature, occupation, and happiness of departed saints,—may hereafter appear to us as wild, as odd, as unlikely and ill-founded, as our childish fancies appear to us now. Like the child, we take our ideas from what we see, and transfer them to what we do *not* see. Like him, we look upon and judge of things above our understanding, by comparing them with things which we do understand: and they may be found afterwards to have as little resemblance,—as little foundation for comparison—as the most chimerical and fantastic visions of a childish imagination. And this I judge to be what Paul had particularly in his thoughts when he said, ‘Now we know in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away;’ even as ‘when I was a child I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.’

‘Our apprehensions of futurity, though they may indeed be in many respects childish, may still be innocent, so long as we are not over-anxious, nor over-positive, to insist upon others receiving them; and too much inclined to make difficulties, or start at those we meet with, from an opinion that we are able to guess and find out the whole of such subjects.’

Thus far Dr. Paley. But it is worth remarking, that among those persons who have the word ‘conversion’ continually in their mouth, there are some who are in practice very remote indeed from the humility and modest docility of children. So far from being so ‘*converted*’ as to be ‘like a little child,’—they are daring in their conjectures and confident in their theories.

It may be added that the knowledge which *is* attainable by children,—and by *us*,—though partial and imperfect, is of practical *use*, as far as it goes, provided it be rightly applied. A child, for instance, understands very little

of the real nature of the sun;—less than the little that *we* know of it: but he very soon comes to understand its power of enlightening,—of warming,—of drying,—of changing the colours of several substances,—of expanding flowers,—and ripening fruits. And a child is not unlikely to conclude, at first, that the sun was created for the sole purpose of giving light and heat to the spot where he lives. He is, at first, ignorant of its conferring the same advantages on distant parts of the world; and perhaps he supposes its real magnitude to be nearly the same as it appears to be. By degrees his knowledge is enlarged, and he comes to understand that the sun shines upon the whole earth. He then, perhaps, looks back with contempt on his own former ignorance, and imagines that he understands fully the whole use and importance of the sun; whereas he still knows but a very small part of it. In time, he may perhaps come to learn that our earth is only one out of many planets, that are enlightened by the same sun; which is itself a larger body than all of them together. And it would be presumptuous for us to conclude that even *that* purpose is the only one, or is even the principal one, for which the sun was created.

Most arrogant, then, must that man be, who should dare to conclude that when he knows something of God's attributes, and of his dispensations, he fully understands the whole, or even the most essential part of them. We know certain relations in which the Most High stands towards us; but there may be other relations besides these, of which we know nothing. We are instructed in some degree how far *we* are interested in the Fall of Adam,—in the Redemption through Christ,—and in other of God's dispensations; but we know not that this is all, or even the greatest part. These events may, for aught we know, have been of consequence to other

orders of Beings, of whose very existence we are ignorant. The death of Christ may, in some unknown way, benefit, millions who never heard of Him. His coming to judgment may affect other worlds besides our own.

Is the thought of this vast extent of ignorance revolting to any one? Let him then recollect the time when he was a child, and refresh his memory by observation of other children. Let him remember how strange many things seemed to him which are now perfectly cleared up;—how utterly ignorant he was of matters which are now quite familiar to him;—how far he was from being able to comprehend the nature, or even to suspect the existence, of many things which now principally occupy his thoughts,—how unaccountable seemed some of the proceedings of his parents, and how unreasonably severe some of their commands, and, above all, how sure he was to fall into mistakes whenever he presumed to fancy that his own notions were adequate, and his knowledge complete.

This habitual study of the infantine mind will prepare us to go any lengths in the consciousness of our ignorance, and the due distrust of our faculties. We shall thus become learned in human nature, as to that most important part of it, its imperfections; and where full and accurate knowledge is not to be attained, we shall at least keep clear of presumptuous error. When the darkness cannot be removed, it is a great point to be aware that it *is* darkness, and not to be misled by false lights, and deceived by delusive appearances.

But are we then, it may be asked, to teach that there is virtue in implicit and uninquiring faith? Is it boundless credulity, and contented ignorance that we are to learn from children?

Ask an intelligent child of intelligent parents whether they exhort him to remain contented in universal igno-

rance,—and to believe implicitly whatever any one tells him, whether on good authority or not;—to abstain from all inquiry,—to repress all curiosity, and to use no endeavours for improving in knowledge and attaining truth. He will tell you that, on the contrary, they commend him for being properly inquiring, and eager to learn;—that they tell him to take nothing on trust that he is capable of sifting thoroughly, and proving satisfactorily;—and that they warn him against being over-credulous, and hasty in admitting without proof what he hears from persons undeserving of credit. Yet they caution him against an indiscriminate and presumptuous curiosity; they assure him that there are some points of knowledge unsuitable to his age, and many that are beyond the reach of his present faculties; which it would be unprofitable, or even hurtful, for him to pry into unseasonably:—that he must wait with patience till his reason is matured; since there is enough, and more than enough, of what is needful for him to learn, to occupy all his attention in the meantime; and they tell him that even of what he has to learn at present, there are some parts which he cannot, as yet, *fully* comprehend, and which, therefore, he must be content to take on trust, on the authority of his Instructors, in whose veracity and judgment he has good reason to confide.

This is the system of the most judicious teachers of youth; and there is in it nothing of inconsistency. For it is possible at once to encourage profitable curiosity, and repress that which is impertinent;—to check indiscriminate credulity, yet to require full faith (on sufficient authority) in matters beyond the reach of the learner's faculties; and to encourage inquiry about such as are *not* beyond his reach. Now if this be the wisest and best way of training children, we cannot doubt, nor wonder, nor complain, that our great Master—our 'Father who is

in Heaven'—has adopted a like method towards us, in our present state of childhood here on earth.

* 'And what if much be still unknown'—

(to use the words of one of the most beautiful of our religious poets,)

The Lord shall teach thee that,
When thou shalt stand before his throne,
Or sit as Mary sat.

'Wait till He shall Himself disclose
Things now beyond thy reach;
But listen not, my child, to those
Who the Lord's secrets teach,—

'Who teach thee more than He has taught;
Tell more than He revealed,
Preach tidings which He never brought,
And read what He left sealed.'

That faith, then, 'without which it is impossible to please God,' does not consist in assenting to any thing *without* sufficient evidence, but in a disposition candidly and fairly to *weigh* the evidence,—in a due distrust of the human faculties,—and in a readiness to admit whatever shall appear to be clearly taught by our divine Instructor, even though it be what we should never have expected, nor can clearly comprehend. Such is the docility which we require of children, and which we commend in them; and such is the *docility* which we must ourselves show, if we would obtain the approbation of our Heavenly Father.

And the same sort of resigned and trustful submission to the will of a wise and kind parent, which we think reasonable in a dutiful and affectionate child, this, it becomes us to pay to the Most High.

Now, an amiable and intelligent child never reasons thus: 'My father's plans are inscrutable to me; and,

therefore, I cannot tell whether the steps he may next take will be for my benefit, or for my hurt: since I cannot understand his reasons for occasionally subjecting me to pain and privation, I cannot be sure whether he may not hereafter, for some reason unintelligible to me, devote me undeservedly to destruction; and therefore I have no ground for trusting to his kindness.' Such, I say, are *not* the thoughts that occur to a well-disposed child; who, notwithstanding his inability to explain to himself, in all cases, the reasons of his being sometimes exposed to pain or inconvenience, feels nevertheless an undoubting and a reasonable confidence that his parents love him and seek his benefit, and understand better than he does, how to promote it.

Such a child will be ready to say 'My father bids me do so and so; and his will is reason enough for *me*. Doubtless there *are* good reasons, though unknown to me, for his command; and these he may perhaps explain to me hereafter; but in the mean time it is my duty to obey.'

And such a child would never presume to pronounce that his father *had* no reason at all for his command, except that such was his pleasure. This would evidently be to attribute to him *caprice*. On the contrary, he doubts not that there *is* good reason both for giving the command, and for withholding the explanation of it. That such is the father's will, would be no good reason, to the father, for *giving* the command; though it *is* a sufficient reason, to the child, for obeying it. For the child, therefore, to insist on it that his father *had* no reason except his will, for what he does, because he has not thought fit to make the reason known, would be not dutiful humility, but the height of rash presumption. So also an earthly king, who is not responsible to any of his subjects for the commands he gives, may sometimes

see fit to issue commands without stating his reasons; and it would be insolent rashness for any one to conclude that he had *no* reasons at all, but acted from mere tyrannical caprice. And we also, if we would imitate the example of dutiful children, or loyal subjects, are bound to trust that our Heavenly Father and King, has good reasons, even when not revealed to us, for all his dealings with mankind.

We, indeed, are exhorted—and very rightly,—to ‘do all for the glory of God;’ this is because it is of advantage to *Men* that our Heavenly Father should be glorified. But to attribute this as a motive to *Him*, and to suppose that *He* can covet glory for his *own* sake, is an idea most absurd, and most degrading.

Yet there have not been wanting persons in high repute as great Theologians, who have dared to assert most distinctly that the Most High inflicts evil on multitudes of his creatures *for no cause whatever* except that *such is his Will*, and to ‘set forth his sovereignty,’ and ‘promote his own glory:’ as if He could literally desire glory!! thus in fact, attributing to Him *caprice*, (though without using that very word itself,) and expressly acknowledging that the decree which they represent Him as making is ‘a horrible one!’

I have been citing the very language of some celebrated writers who were professed disciples of Him who said ‘Be ye merciful, even as your Father who is in Heaven is merciful;’ and fellow-disciples with the Apostle who declared that ‘God willeth not that any should perish.’

Sometimes they cite in support of their views, the Apostle Paul’s illustration from the Potter and the Clay; which they interpret in a sense just the *opposite* of its plain meaning. The Potter, says the Apostle, ‘has power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel

to honour and another to dishonour;—that is, some to nobler, and some to meaner uses: but he makes all for *some* use. We know that no Potter ever makes any vessel *on purpose to be broken or destroyed*. The Apostle's illustration, therefore, so far from proving the doctrine it is brought forward to support, tends, as far as it goes, to prove the very contrary.

‘But how then,’—these writers say—‘can you explain the state of ignorance and sinfulness and wretchedness in which vast numbers are permitted to remain?’ And those who take upon them to guess at the *motives* which influence the mind of the Most High, persuade themselves that they are practising meek humility, though in truth they are guilty of the rashest presumption.

A truly humble Christian will answer that he *cannot* explain these difficulties at all; any more than a child can, many of the proceedings of grown people. But that is no reason why he should accept as an explanation what does not really explain anything at all, but only goes to remove one great difficulty, by raising up another much greater, in its place. To the question, ‘Lord, and what shall this man do?’ the answer of Scripture often is, ‘What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.’

It is a thing very *improbable*—I have heard it alleged—that any man's eternal salvation should ever be made to depend on his being able to distinguish Jesus of Nazareth from the multitude of pretending impostors that have appeared in the world, and to sift evidence to ascertain the reality of the christian miracles which are appealed to as the ground on which rest the claims of the Gospel to be received as a Revelation from Heaven. If any one undertakes to prove that this is *not* improbable, and to explain it as what we should naturally have expected, his task will be a hard one. But one may easily show that it is not at all MORE improbable than

much that is before our eyes in the natural world. We daily see cases in which men are compelled—I may say *on pain of death*—to obtain such knowledge and exercise such judgment as are likely in many to be wanting. If, for example, a Being of some different order from ourselves,—an inhabitant perhaps of some distant Planet,—were told that there are, in this world of ours, many poisonous fruits and other vegetable productions, tempting to the eye, and often difficult to be distinguished from the wholesome, and that on the distinguishing of them a man's life might often depend,—such a Being might urge that all this is highly *improbable*. But whether probable or not, we all know that it is *true*. Hence, those who resolve to believe and disbelieve entirely according to their own notions of what is probable, seldom stop short of Atheism, or complete and universal scepticism.

Why, and how, it was necessary that the innocent blood should be shed for Man's redemption, we know no more than Abraham did why he was commanded to offer up his Son. And when the Apostle Peter allowed himself to judge concerning God's counsels, according to his own notions of what was probable, and his own natural sentiments,—surrendering himself to what some call the 'dictates of the heart,'—he incurred a rebuke for saying 'Be it far from Thee, Lord; there shall no such thing happen unto Thee.'

If you are asked how you know that the sacrifice of Christ was necessary, you should answer, Because the Scriptures inform us that it did *take place*. It must therefore have been necessary, under the *actual* circumstances. But we have no right to frame any metaphysical theories to prove that this necessity *would* have existed under any other, quite different, or even opposite circumstances.

The actual state of things was, we know, that the

greater part of the Jewish nation refused to receive Jesus as the Christ: it being plainly the divine decree that they should not be compelled by external force to receive Him against their will. And they thereupon condemned Him to death. We have no right to maintain that his death *would* have been necessary under the opposite supposition of a universal acceptance of Him. On the contrary we are expressly told by the Sacred Writers ‘I wot that *through ignorance* ye did it, as did also your Rulers,’ [*Acts iii.*] ‘*Because they knew Him not*, nor yet the voices of the prophets, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.’ And again, ‘For if the princes of this world *had known* the Wisdom of God, they would *not* have crucified the Lord of Glory.’ [*1 Cor. ii.*]

‘It may be needful,’ says Bishop Butler, ‘to mention that several questions which have been brought into the subject before us, and determined, are not entered into here: questions which have been, I fear, rashly determined—and with equal rashness—contrary ways. For instance, whether *God could* have saved the world by other means than through the death of Christ, consistently with the general laws of his government? and, had Christ *not* come into the world, what *would* have been the future condition of the better sort of men?

‘The meaning of the first of these questions is greatly ambiguous; and neither of them can be answered without going upon that infinitely absurd position, that we know the whole of the case. And perhaps the very inquiry,—what *would* have followed if God had *not* done as He has?—may have in it some impropriety.’ Thus far, the judicious Bishop Butler.

But the present is one of the cases in which, though unable to explain, and not venturing to ask, why it was necessary that such and such an event should *take place*

at all, it is allowable and profitable to inquire why it was *made known* to us. These are two totally distinct inquiries, though the thoughtless often confound them together. It is often hopeless and presumptuous to seek for the cause why so and so did *occur*, when, yet, it may be right to seek, and easy to find, why,—having occurred,—it was *revealed* to Man. If therefore any one of good sense and truly humble piety were asked why the sufferings and death of the Christ were necessary, he would answer that he cannot tell: but if asked why this fact was *made known* to us in Scripture, he would answer, under the guidance of the Apostle, that it was to give us confidence in God's loving-kindness and care for us. 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'

If asked to account for the existence of any evil at all in the Universe, he would answer that that is a question beyond Man's natural powers, and on which the Scriptures give us no revelation: but he would add that though they do *not* tell us what *is* the cause of evil, they do teach us—which is no small matter—what is *not* the cause;—that it cannot be from ill-will, or indifference, or caprice, on the part of the Most High, as is proved by the sufferings undergone by the *Beloved One*, 'in whom He was well-pleased.' If asked how he can be sure that the representation is untrue which I have just now alluded to, that God inflicts evil for no cause whatever but that such is his Will, and that it is for the sake of his Glory, and the assertion of his Sovereignty,—if asked this,—he would reply that this is fully disproved by the Son of God having been Himself, 'made perfect through suffering.' For no conceivable Being—not even a tyrant—would ever, wantonly and through mere caprice, inflict sufferings on the object of *his own strong love*.

Though we know, therefore, that from some cause unknown to us, evil does exist, we are assured that that cause *cannot* be a deficiency of goodness in the Most High.

We are thus enabled to learn, if we will humbly consult Scripture,—not indeed what is the origin of evil, or the cause of Christ's suffering, but what is *not* the cause of evil, and why the suffering of Christ was *made known* to us.

But the doctrine we have been considering, is,—as I have already remarked,—the death of Christ not merely as a martyr in the cause of truth, but as an atoning *sacrifice* for the redemption of Mankind. And as this is what was, in point of fact, utterly unexpected, and what no one of good sense would ever attempt to explain and account for, so, there was the more need that it should be very fully and strongly declared in Scripture. For, the more strange and paradoxical any doctrine is, which we are nevertheless required to receive on the authority of Scripture, the more we may expect distinct and frequently repeated Scripture-statements of such doctrine.

And this, accordingly, is what we do find, with respect to the doctrine of the Atonement. The assertions of it, and allusions to it are so numerous and clear that those who are resolved (as some do resolve) to explain all these away, and, (cost what it may) to reject the doctrine, find no small difficulty in the task they undertake.

But even if most, or all of these assertions and allusions could be got rid of, there would still remain what appears to me a still stronger argument than all of them together,—in the Institution of the Eucharist. The solemn appointment of that Ordinance was of itself sufficient to establish the *sacrificial* character of Christ's death, and to impress the doctrine strongly on men's minds; considering who and what the persons were among

whom the Gospel was introduced. They were persons—both the Jews and the Pagans—who had always from their infancy been familiar with the idea of *sacrifices* as a part of religious worship; and of the worshippers holding a feast on the sacrifice,—partaking of the flesh of the victim. To such persons the partaking of the bread and wine which were appointed as symbols of the flesh and blood of Him their Master, whose life they were told was ‘given for the world,’ could not fail to suggest the belief of his death being a sacrifice. And had there been any error in this their belief, we cannot doubt that it would have been immediately and carefully corrected, instead of being,—as we find it was,—confirmed and assiduously inculcated. Had Jesus been merely a Martyr—the greatest of all Martyrs—to the cause of divine truth, it would indeed have been very natural that his death should have been in some way solemnly commemorated by the Church; and perhaps by some symbolical representation of the *death itself*; but not, surely, by the *eating and drinking* of the symbols of his body and blood. Not only is the bread *broken* and the wine *poured* out, (which sufficiently represent the wounding of his body, and the shedding of his blood,) but both are *partaken* of by those who celebrate the Rite. And this would be an unmeaning and absurd kind of ceremonial in celebrating a mere martyrdom, such as that of Stephen, for instance, or any other Martyr, however eminent. Even if we had not therefore such numerous allusions as we do find in Scripture to ‘Christ our *Passover*’ sacrificed for us, and ‘entering into the most holy place with his own blood,’ as both the sacrificing Priest, and the slain victim,—if there were fewer than there are, of such statements and allusions, or if we could bring ourselves to think these were all to be explained away as figures of speech, still, the Sacrament

of the Lord's Supper,—early and generally established as we know it was,—would be alone a decisive proof that the early Christians must have understood from that Ordinance itself that our Lord's death was not a mere Martyrdom, but a true sacrifice,—similar to,—though far surpassing,—the expiatory sacrifices which they had been familiar with under the Law, and which the Sacred Writers so often refer to as types of the offering of Christ.

And as this doctrine—a doctrine so strange and by human reason inexplicable—was designed not only to be received but strongly impressed on the Christian's mind, and habitually present to it, so, it seemed good to divine wisdom that we should not be left to search out passages of Scripture, and on the strength of these lay down the doctrine as a well-established Article of our Creed, to be merely assented to, once for all, and thenceforward, perhaps little thought of, but that we should moreover be continually reminded of it, by the often repeated celebration of a Rite which clearly implies the doctrine, and vividly brings it before the thoughts.

You then, my christian friends, who are habitual attendants at the Lord's Table, I would remind to be duly grateful, among other mercies, for the assurance thus afforded you of the goodness of Him 'who spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,' and for the care which He has manifested thus to impress this on your mind.

And any who may have hitherto been guilty of neglecting that Holy Ordinance, I would exhort to persist in that sin no longer, but to attend at the Lord's Table with humble penitence for your past omissions, and with full trust in the mercy of Him who has given you such assurance of his loving-kindness.

And all of you I would exhort to listen to none who

would presume to explain those counsels of the Most High, which He has not thought fit to reveal; or who would dare to assert that He inflicts any sufferings on his creatures for no reason at all except to declare his own sovereignty.

And I would exhort you to *bear* patiently,—to *wait* patiently,—to *run* patiently, and to *hope* patiently.

Bear, with patience any afflictions, that may be sent on you by Him to whose goodness, you have so much reason to trust. *Wait with patience* for that fuller knowledge which will be afforded us when this our state of childhood here on Earth shall have come to an end. *Run with patience* the race that is now set before you, as dutiful and obedient children of your heavenly Father. And *hope with patience* for your admission to his more immediate presence, when you shall be permitted to ‘see Him as He is.’

This Discourse was delivered on one of the Anniversaries of the Gospel-Propagation Society. It was not however printed in the Annual Report; that practice having been, at my suggestion, discontinued.

Since this Discourse was delivered, some improvements have been introduced in the details of the Society's regulations.

Some calumnious misrepresentations which at one time were circulated to the disparagement of the Society, but which have since died away, I have accordingly thought it best not to notice.

SERMON XXI.

PHIL. IV. 17.

Not because I desire a [the] gift, but I desire fruit that may abound on your account.

THIS Epistle was written in acknowledgment of a liberal contribution from the Philippians sent to the Apostle when in prison, by the hands of Epaphroditus. And in the course of the Epistle he adverts in several places to the liberality they had manifested not only on this occasion, but more than once before. In one of these places [i. 5.] this allusion does not appear in our version: but the words which are rendered 'your fellowship in the Gospel,' undoubtedly mean 'your *contribution* towards the Gospel;' that is, your contribution towards the maintenance of a christian minister. In another place [iv. 14.] where the Apostle says 'ye have well done that ye did *communicate* with my affliction,' the word rendered 'communicate' corresponds with that which had above been rendered 'fellowship,' but which certainly means 'contribution.' And again [*Rom.* xv. 26.] where he speaks of 'a *contribution* for the poor Society at Jerusalem,' the word in the original is the very same.

In that Epistle [*Romans*] and also in those to the Corinthians, as well as in the one before us, you must have observed frequent and earnest commendations of the duty of liberality towards christian brethren, and especially of bounty so directed as to conduce towards the furtherance of the Gospel.

And you will see from the general tone of what he says, that this earnestness was more for the sake of the *givers* than of the receivers;—more on account of the beneficial effect on the mind of those who thus manifest, and thus exercise, their feelings of christian zeal and christian benevolence, than for the sake of the advantage thence resulting to the immediate objects of that benevolence. ‘It is not (he says) that I desire the gift, but I desire the fruit that may abound on *your* account.’

And hence we may perceive one cause at least of that general law of divine Providence which makes Man universally dependent for almost every kind of advantage, on his fellow-men. The human Race would perish but for the care bestowed in infancy and childhood for a far longer portion of time than is requisite for any other animal. And all the arts of life which to Man much more than supply the place of those instincts with which the lower animals are far more liberally endowed, are not left to be devised by each individual for himself, but are communicated from man to man. In all things that concern this present world, we are continually indebted for almost everything we possess and enjoy, to each other’s services.

But in all that pertains to Man’s Eternal welfare,—to his spiritual benefit,—to the directly heaven-sent gift of the Gospel-revelation, — many persons might perhaps have expected that a different rule would be established. Revealed-religion, introduced by miraculous displays which are a departure from the ordinary course of nature, many might have supposed would be promulgated and kept up

in a way different from that ordinary course;—that a direct Revelation would be made to all, or to all for whom the religion was designed; and that the salvation of one man would not be left to depend in any degree on another man's zealous exertions, and vigilant care, and sound judgment.

We know however that any such expectations as these have not been realized. We know the fact—and a most awful fact it is, to any one who will seriously reflect on the subject—that men are, to all appearance, as much dependent on the good-offices of their fellow-men, for the reception of Gospel-truth, and the maintenance of it in its purity, as for the various branches of knowledge, and other advantages which have reference to the present life only. The especial blessing from on high which we look for in such a work,—the divine aid without which no labours of Man can avail,—is an *aid* only to those labours, and no substitute for them; for 'how shall men believe (says the Apostle Paul) in Him of whom they have not heard? and *how shall they hear* without a *preacher?*' The Gospel, once introduced by superhuman means, was left to spread itself, through the divine blessing on *human* agency; like the leaven to which our Lord compares the Kingdom of Heaven, which converts into fresh leaven the portion next adjoining it, and that, the next, 'till the whole is leavened.'

And this appointment of Providence,—this analogy between the natural world and the Gospel dispensation—is the more striking, from the circumstance that we see it taking place, not, for the first time, when miraculous interposition had ceased altogether, but during the very age of miracles. He who had fed the multitudes with a few loaves, and who afterwards sent out his Apostles—gifted with miraculous powers, as their credentials from Heaven,—to preach the Gospel throughout the civilized

world, left those very Apostles and their fellow-labourers—as we learn from the Epistle now before us, and from others—to be supported in their imprisonments and provided with requisite supplies for their journeys, by the contributions of the best-disposed among the christian brethren, and partly even by each other's manual toil: 'Ye yourselves also know,' said Paul to the Elders at Miletus, 'that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and of those that were with me.'

We cannot indeed suppose that the Most High can stand in *need* of the services of his creatures for the accomplishment of his designs. But still we see that the appointment of his Providence was, that then, and of course ever after, the propagation and support of the Gospel should be a continual call for Men's exertions;—not only a call on those actually engaged in the Ministry, but also on all who should wish success to the cause, to come forward, in some way or other, to lend it their aid.

And one purpose, as I have already said, for which this appointment was designed, appears to be, the effect produced on the minds of those who *will* thus come forward;—the 'fruit' (as the Apostle calls it) which they are thus enabled to bring forth. Our own estimate of the value of the Gospel,—our love for the redeeming mercy of God in Christ Jesus,—our gratitude for all that has been done for us here, and prepared for us hereafter, and our study to become, through divine help, 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,'—in short, all christian feelings and principles, are cherished, and kept up, and strengthened, by such efforts and such outward acts as naturally spring from these very feelings; and if *not* thus exercised and brought into action, will become languid, and in time nearly extinct.

And the case is the same with every sentiment,—every

active principle—of our whole nature. If for instance you feel an affectionate attachment to any one, this prompts you to wish to do some service to him *yourself*—to manifest by some outward act the regard you feel, and not to rest satisfied with the well-being of the person you thus regard, unless you can in some way *yourself* contribute to it: and again, the more you do thus contribute to his welfare—the greater the services you are enabled to perform for a friend,—the greater the exertions, and even sacrifices, made for his benefit, the stronger the attachment will usually become. It is the same with patriotism. One in whom the sentiment is strong, is not satisfied with his Country's prosperity, unless he can himself *do* something, great or small, to promote the public good, or at least in some way to manifest his feeling; and the more service anyone is enabled to perform, either for his Country, or for any party, class, or district, that he may be attached to, the stronger in general will that attachment become. The cause for which any one has earnestly contended, becomes endeared to him by that very circumstance.

And the same rule holds good in respect of religion. The stronger the sentiment is in anyone the less will he be satisfied with merely believing and feeling; the more will he experience a kind of craving to *do* something in *consequence* of that belief and feeling;—to give vent, as it were, by some outward act, to the sentiment within him; and again, the more he thus acts upon, and manifests his feeling, the stronger it will usually become.

It may be thought however that, in the case of *our* religion at least, to lead a pure and upright and virtuous life in conformity with the divine will, does constitute sufficiently the outward practical manifestation of the inward principle of religion. And undoubtedly that man is miserably deceived who flatters himself that he can

have any genuine religion *without* striving to lead such a life. But the endeavour, generally, to lead a virtuous life, does not alone sufficiently meet that craving which I have spoken of, to do something in manifestation of, and *properly in consequence* of, any sentiment that is really and strongly felt. For there are other motives besides religion for the practice of the various moral duties. Mere natural conscience, and mere worldly prudence,—the desire of prosperity, health, comfort, and good reputation, are indeed sadly *insufficient* motives to moral conduct, but still they *are* motives, pointing the same way with religious obligation. Now, as the sentiment of friendship prompts us to do something as a mark of friendship *purely and solely* in consequence of that feeling, so it is with the religious sentiment also. Wherever it is strong, it prompts a man to do something solely and properly in consequence of his religion, and for which there could be no *other* motive. And this desire when strong, is not fully satisfied even by the practice of publicly assembling at stated times for the purposes of divine worship. Something requires to be superadded to this, that is beyond the common and customary manifestation of devotion; something that shall call for more personal exertion and thought and care. And accordingly, as men's religious notions are but too often wofully erroneous, so, we may observe corresponding errors in their outward practical manifestations of religious zeal.

In some instances one may observe the tendency I have been speaking of, leading to a multiplication of burdensome ceremonies,—to the pageantry of splendid processions, or to the gorgeous and extravagant decoration of places of worship: in others, again, it finds a vent in long and toilsome pilgrimages to supposed sacred spots; or in ascetic mortification and self-torture of various kinds. Others again, of a different character, are led into pug-

nacious disputations, into bitter controversy and party-spirit, and even into sanguinary persecutions, and religious wars. In different ways, according to their several dispositions, are men led, when strangers to the genuine spirit of the Gospel, to manifest their strong, though perverted, religious feelings, by *doing something* for the supposed glory of God, and strictly and properly *in consequence* of their religious sentiments.

The comparative neglect of moral duties which is but too often to be observed in persons whose sense of religion, though miserably perverted, is proved to be real and strong even by the very follies, or crimes, or self-inflicted sufferings to which it impels them,—this—is to be attributed, partly indeed to the disinclination of the natural man to the virtuous regulation of the mind and conduct, but partly also to the desire I have spoken of, of doing, in the cause of religion, something that is done purely for the religion's sake, and for which there could be *no other* motive.

Now, for every tendency of our nature,—every human desire,—that is not in itself evil, God has provided some right and appropriate exercise. And the appointed exercise for that which I have been now speaking of, is, to exert ourselves, each as he finds opportunity—for the communication of Gospel-truth to our fellow-creatures;—for the preservation and wide diffusion of christian knowledge and practice.

The Philippians we have been reading of had eagerly and sincerely embraced the Gospel. They seem to have been distinguished among Paul's converts for the purity of their faith and practice; for he calls them his 'joy and crown;' and exhorting them earnestly to stand fast [ch. iv.] finds no occasion to mingle (as he was obliged to do in addressing other churches) one word of censure, or hint of complaint, with all his exhortations. He speaks

warmly of their having him in their heart.* These men's hearts were evidently abounding in gratitude for the inestimable benefit they had received, and which they prized as it deserved. 'Lord, what can I *do*?' is the question that spontaneously suggests itself to such a heart; 'How shall I manifest, and give vent to my feelings?' Such, I say, would be the inquiry that would be sure to arise in a heart thus overflowing with grateful and devoted love. And the answer to it, in men who had so well learned the Gospel as these had, would be no less sure to occur. They raised contributions for the support of the Missionary who had converted them to Christianity, and who was gone to proclaim the same glad tidings to others. They were not content to maintain christian ministers in their own city; they did not deem it enough to instruct their own children, and exhort their neighbours, and to seek the conversion of the idolaters immediately around them; but they sent their contributions to Paul at Thessalonica, and at Rome; not calculating how much might fairly be expected from the Thessalonians, and from the Romans, but considering how much *could* be done by themselves; and eagerly seeking, not, a fair plea for being *excused* from contributing, but an *opportunity* of bestowing their contributions. They had designed, as we learn from the Apostle, [iv. 10,] to forward their supplies to him some time before; but they 'lacked opportunity.'

We, my christian friends,—we, the Christians of this age and country, at least, whatever else we may lack, are far from lacking *opportunity*. I know not indeed that in any age or country Christians have been so situated as not to have it in their power, in some way or other, and in some degree, to give proof of their gratitude for the benefit

* This is the marginal reading of chap. i., v. 7., and is undoubtedly the right one.

conferred on them in the Gospel, in the most appropriate and truly christian mode, by helping, directly or indirectly, to instruct or convert, or encourage, or to recall from error and sin, some portion of their fellow-creatures, and thus to further the fulfilment of the prayer they are taught by their Master to utter ‘Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’

But to us in particular, the Society whose claims I am now advocating presents a peculiar *opportunity*, and reminds us of a peculiarly urgent *call*, and consequently lays upon us an especial *responsibility*.

I. The *call* I allude to is, as I have said, one of great urgency. This Nation, as you know, possesses numerous and extensive Colonies in various parts of the Globe; not, properly, *foreign* parts. Thousands on thousands of our countrymen are flocking thither as settlers every year. And both in those Colonies and in other Regions also with which our traders and other voyagers have frequent intercourse, there are vast multitudes of unenlightened Pagans, many of them ready to listen to the glad tidings of salvation through Christ, if they had but sufficient provision of instructors.* Has then, this Christian Nation, as it is called, made it a point to provide such instruction? On the contrary, it is but too certain, as you may see by looking over the Reports from almost any quarter of the world that are laid before this Society, that there is not anything like an adequate provision even for the spiritual wants of our very countrymen in the Colonies. You may, in those Reports, see notices of districts as extensive as many an English county which enjoy only the occasional presence of one or two clergy-

* Our Sovereign has a greater number of Pagan or Mahometan than of Christian subjects.

men, and in which for want of religious instruction and superintendence, the rapidly increasing population are in imminent danger of degenerating into downright heathens. And too often the European settlers or visitors serve as Missionaries of the Prince of Darkness to the aboriginal heathens, by corrupting them with all the vices of civilized life, recommended by superior knowledge and intelligence. As a *nation* calling itself a *christian* nation, our foreign settlements are anything but a credit to us. As individual Christians, does not such a state of things loudly call on us, if we are Christians in anything but in name, to seek for a remedy? ‘The harvest truly is plenteous,’ as our Lord said, ‘but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.’ Such ought to be *our* prayer *now*: but we cannot reasonably call on *Him* to hear our prayer, if we will not hear it ourselves;—if we do not seek for opportunities of doing whatever lies in *us* towards its fulfilment.

II. But I have said not only that the *call* is urgent, but that this Society is so framed for meeting that call as to present us with the very means of doing just what we ought most earnestly to desire to do. The want was felt above a century and a half ago, and felt to be, as it was, very urgent,—though it is much *more* urgent now than then,—and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* was established for the purpose of supplying that want. If any one looks into the details of its proceedings during the long period of its existence, (which are recorded, and easily accessible to any one who feels an interest in the subject,) he will be struck with

* The Protestant Episcopalian Church of the United States owes its existence entirely to this Society.

the vast amount of good done by it, and still more struck, I fear, with the greater amount of what has been left undone,—what has been unavoidably omitted, or very imperfectly accomplished, through the scantiness of the funds of the Society. He will see that there has been a continual call, from various quarters, for Missionaries for the conversion of the heathen, for Ministers and Catechists for the instruction of fresh and fresh bodies of settlers; and these wants have been in some instances most opportunely supplied, but in many others, left unsupplied through deficiency of means. But he will find that the funds as far as they would go, have been expended in a manner that reflects high credit on this truly venerable Society; which has ever laboured to diffuse the pure light of the Gospel according to the genuine principles of the Church its members belong to, keeping clear as much as possible of all the party-feelings which have from time to time distracted that Church. And on this ground it is that I have laboured to establish a branch of the Society in my own Diocese, and have earnestly recommended it to the support of those most immediately within my reach.

III. I have said not only that the condition of our foreign settlements (if they are to be called foreign) constitutes a strong call for exertion on the part of those who have any real earnest feeling as Christians; and again, that this Society holds out an opportunity for manifesting that feeling; but I added also, that such an opportunity and such a call must lay on us a most awful *responsibility*. I have heard it remarked that a Society such as this,—which is not a Church, nor an Agent delegated by the Church as a Body, but merely composed of individual Churchmen,—that such a Society is a reproach to the Church itself, but a high credit to the individual members of the Church. Let it be remembered however that this

credit is confined to those only who heartily support the Society. To those who regard with indifference the spiritual condition of their fellow-creatures and fellow-subjects in foreign parts, the existence of such a Society as this is an aggravated reproach; because it cannot be said of them as of the Philippians of old ‘ye lacked *opportunity*.’ Is it not a disgrace to a People calling themselves Christians, and by whom such vast sums are annually expended in commercial speculations,—in the encouragement of various useful or ornamental arts,—and in every description of luxury,—is it not a foul disgrace, I say, to such a People that thousands upon thousands even of persons nearly connected with themselves, should be left to perish in unchristian darkness, because we grudge the cost of providing them with instruction? and that when a Society is actually in existence, well fitted, and ready, to remedy the evil, this very Society should be (for such is the melancholy fact) on the very eve of bankruptcy? so scantily supported in this wealthy country, that unless a change for the better soon take place, it will be compelled to abandon some of its Missions (when they need extending) and break up some of its establishments?

Some however, perhaps, may be inclined to say—or at least inwardly to think,—truly this is a cause in which the *Clergy* ought to feel a lively interest, and to come forward zealously and liberally; but religious matters are more properly *their* concern: *laymen* cannot be expected to take so much interest in the propagation of the Gospel. Now the Laity certainly are not called on or encouraged to intrude into the ministerial office;—to take upon them the duties of public Spiritual teachers, and administerers of the Sacraments. Nothing of irregularities such as this did our Society ever countenance. But if any one considers himself exempt from all call

to contribute, both by pecuniary means, and in all other ways that *are* open to the Laity, towards the great objects of this Society,—if he feel no interest, and use no exertions in the cause, on the ground that he is not a *clergyman*, I would ask such a one, what he would think of *our* doctrine if we were to teach that the highest glories of heaven are reserved for the Clergy exclusively; that the souls of Laymen are of comparatively small account in their Redeemer's sight; and that the best Christians must be content with a very humble and inferior place in the mansions of eternal bliss, unless they have been admitted to Holy Orders? How great would be the indignation at such a groundless and arrogant assumption on our part, that would be felt and expressed by all;—by all, including those who are content to forego all pretensions to an equal share in christian *zeal*,—in Gospel-*duties*;—though not to forego their equal claim to christian *hopes*,—to Gospel-promises, —to heavenly happiness!

Let any one of you, my christian friends, who does feel that gratitude and love towards his Saviour—that high value for the blessing of Gospel-light, which prompts him to seek how he may *do* something to manifest his sense of mercies received,—let any such person behold here an opportunity of promoting 'glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good-will towards men;' not merely worldly peace, but heavenly; and divine good-will towards men.

But if again any one feels conscious within his own heart that his christian gratitude and love and zeal fall lamentably short of what he knows he *ought* to feel, and if he sincerely desires to kindle into warmth those sentiments which are but coldly alive within him, let him behold here one of the best exercises by which to foster and strengthen those sentiments. For, as I observed at

the beginning, *acting* conformably to any principle tends above all things to cherish and fortify the principle itself. A cause in which we have *exerted* ourselves becomes more and more endeared to us through those very efforts.

Act therefore as you *would* spontaneously and gladly act if you *had* those christian feelings and that christian zeal which you know the Christian *ought* to have, and which you wish to generate and to encourage in your own breast; and the very outward acts themselves, coupled with earnest petitions for divine grace, will produce and strengthen and keep up that very disposition of which such acts are the natural fruits.

Give bountifully, according to your ability, on this, and on similar occasions; but pray at the same time for a heart to 'give not grudgingly or of necessity, because God loveth a cheerful giver.' Engage earnestly as far as occasions may offer, in this great cause; exert yourself for it as your reason tells you the cause itself deserves; and your feelings will in time overtake your reason; the cause itself will become endeared to you, in proportion as you shall have laboured to advance it; and you will more and more highly prize for yourself the Gospel of Jesus Christ, through your own endeavours to communicate that blessing to others, by taking part in the propagation of the Gospel.

THE END.

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MENTAL CULTURE

REQUIRED FOR

CHRISTIAN MINISTERS.

A SERMON

DELIVERED IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, DUBLIN,

ON OCCASION OF THE CONSECRATION

OF

WILLIAM FITZGERALD, D.D., BISHOP OF CORK,

MARCH 8th, 1857.

BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.



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A Person in the diocese of Cork, having asked for the perusal of the Sermon of Consecration, was subsequently permitted to publish it, having received the MS. as a gift, to be dealt with at discretion.

A SERMON.

1 COR. i. 26, 27.

“Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (are called). But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.”

THE circumstance to which Paul is, in this portion of the epistle, directing the attention of the Corinthians, namely, the weakness, humanly speaking, of those who were the agents in their conversion—their “calling,” as he expresses it—is a decisive proof, and is appealed to as such by him, of the superhuman origin of the Christian religion. And it is a proof to *us*, no less than to them; since we know, that,—not at Corinth only, but throughout the greater part of the civilized world, the religion did from the very first make great and rapid progress, under the preaching of men, most of whom were Jewish fishermen and peasants; not aided, but for the most part opposed,

by the majority of the rich, the powerful, and the learned.

The absence of worldly advantages in the *instruments* chosen by Providence for this mighty work, is evidently what the Apostle is dwelling on. His expression indeed appears, as it stands in our translation, somewhat ambiguous. The words, “are called” (which are supplied by the translators, and have nothing answering to them in the original) might conceivably be understood,—and I believe sometimes *are* understood,—of the *persons converted*—the hearers, not the preachers. But undoubtedly we ought to understand by “called” those who were called to be *ministers* of the Gospel: for *that* is manifestly the Apostle’s meaning. If it had been true—which it was not—that hardly any but the lowest and most ignorant of mankind had become Christians; if no such persons as Cornelius the centurion, and Sergius Paulus the Roman governor (Paul’s first Christian convert), and Dionysius the judge of the Areopagus, had ever become disciples, but only slaves and the lowest of the people,—this would never have been appealed to as a triumph of divine power. But evidently the “weak things” which God had chosen to “confound the strong,” were the humble and humanly powerless agents chosen by Him, in order to make manifest that it was *his* hand that gave them victory.

And as Paul himself was, so far, an apparent exception to the general rule, as not being one of the unlearned, he immediately proceeds to point out to the Corinthians, that he had all along determined himself to forego the use of such advantages as he possessed, suppressing his learning, putting aside all eloquence, and in short laying bare as it were the divine agency which was at work, by stripping off the needless equipment of human arts and accomplishments. “And I, brethren,” says he, “when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

It is probable, — as indeed we may collect from the general tone of both the epistles to the Corinthians, — that they were, in common with most of the Greeks, or perhaps even more, disposed to set too high a value on human learning, — or ingenious rhetoric, and that *sophia*, translated in our version “Wisdom,” but by which was understood what we now call Philosophy; and that some persons among them, possessing, or pretending to, such qualifications, sought to disparage the Apostle, and exalt themselves above him

(see 2 Cor. xi.): and he is careful to impress on them how independent of any such aids was the mighty agency by which the Gospel was propagated, and how immeasurably superior. But as for the existence of that agency—the “demonstration,”—*i. e.*, the proof afforded by the display of miraculous power,—of this, the Corinthians were themselves sufficient witnesses. And, to *us*, besides all the other evidence of the Christian miracles, the early and rapid spread of the religion, considering who, and what its first preachers were, is sufficient alone to furnish a decisive proof.

When attempts are made by avowed Antichristians to represent—in defiance of all sound principles of evidence—the records of the Christian miracles as no more than “cunningly devised fables,”—and when again others, professed believers in the Gospel, set themselves to explain away with most absurd ingenuity, those miracles as mere natural occurrences, both of them leave behind them a far greater improbability than what they undertake to remove. Even if their theories were in themselves as reasonable as they are grossly the reverse, it would still rest with them to *account for the introduction* of Christianity. For, as Origen has justly observed, the establishment of the religion by miraculous pretensions, when the pretensions were unfounded, would be itself incomparably a greater miracle—something far more incredible—than all that are recorded in Scripture. When

indeed any narrative is put before us, simply as a narrative, to be tried on its own merits, we examine the evidence external and internal, and decide accordingly; requiring the stronger proofs in proportion as what is related is of a marvellous character, and thence to be accounted intrinsically improbable. This test our Scripture narratives can stand; but it is far from being a fair test as applied to *them*. For we ought not to keep out of sight the undeniable and notorious fact, more marvellous than all that are recorded, that (in Dr. Paley's words) a Jewish peasant overthrew the religion of the world. The rational fair procedure is to set before the mind in the first instance the *present existence* of Christianity, and then to consider how its existence can be accounted for. It did not spread itself—like the religion of Mahomet—by force of arms: it did not appeal to the *passions*,—to men's sensuality or cupidity; it was not a scheme set up and supported by civil rulers for *political* ends: it was so far from finding favour through men's *religious* feelings, that it was the most distasteful to each in proportion to their attachment to the religions, they had been brought up in, being opposed to all of them; and that it was not a system devised by ingenious philosophers, and adorned and recommended by the graces of eloquence, we see for ourselves, in the plain, simple, homely, and inartificial style of the books which have come down to us. It was intro-

duced, and it rapidly prevailed, in spite of all obstacles, by its *miraculous claims*; claims which had nothing to support them except reality, and which would have exposed every preacher of the Gospel to scornful rejection and derision, had they not been well-established. The narratives therefore in our Scripture books, however wonderful, are not to be regarded as at all *improbable*; because there is no alternative except believing what is incomparably more improbable. Strong as is the presumption against every miracle, abstractedly,—in this case the presumption is so much on the side of miracles, that we may be sure there must have been wrought above a hundred times more than are distinctly recorded, since without them the effects that did take place would have been utterly impossible. But for these “signs of an Apostle,” as Paul calls them, he could never have even obtained a hearing, when “bringing such strange things to men’s ears:” still less could he have overthrown as he did the “mighty things of the world,” but “by demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”

Much, and various, and important instruction may be drawn from all this, by one “who hath ears to hear.” But it rests with us to make a wise and fair, or an unwise and mischievous, application of all that the Scriptures record. It is possible, *e.g.*, with the pretence and under the appearance of imitating the Apostles, to depart, in reality, most widely from the example they

have left us. A church, for instance, that should claim, as the Apostles did, miraculous powers, but without being able, as they were, to establish that claim, would be imitating them in the same sense in which a counterfeit coin of base metal is called an imitation of a genuine one. And from the individuals who, from time to time, in various ages and countries, have arisen pretending to inspiration in the highest and strict sense—professing to have received such direct communications from heaven as were bestowed on the Apostles, but without being able to exhibit those sensibly miraculous proofs which are the “signs of an Apostle;” such men imitate them only in the same way that a real ambassador from some sovereign is imitated by a false pretender who claims that character, without being able to exhibit any credentials.

And if any one should disparage all use of learning, and depreciate the cultivation of the intellect, on the ground that Paul “determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” he would be in reality acting quite contrary to that Apostle’s example. For Paul did employ the most powerful means that were within his reach ; and we, if we would be followers of him, must use the best means that Providence has placed within *our* reach. Why did he disdain to resort to the aid of human learning and eloquence ? Evidently because he wished to manifest as clearly as possible the vast superiority of the agency he did em-

ploy—the “demonstration of the spirit and of power ;” *i. e.*, the proof afforded by the display of the miraculous gifts conferred on him. We who do *not* possess such gifts as his, must, if we would profit by his example, reverse, in many respects, his procedure, in conformity to our situation ; endeavouring by the employment of such human means as are within our reach, to supply, as far as that is possible, the want of those superhuman powers which he enjoyed. He possessed, as we learn from his own declarations, in a pre-eminent degree, the miraculous gift of tongues. For those on whom no such gift has been bestowed, diligent study is necessary to acquire such languages as they have need of, either for the perusal of Scripture in the original, or for instructing the people of other tongues. And our want of the immediate divine revelations which he enjoyed—for he, as he assures the Galatians, “received not his Gospel of Man, nor was taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ :”—this want we must supply as far as we are able, by the attentive study, both of the Scriptures, and of such works as may serve to illustrate them. To pretend to miraculous gifts which are *not* conferred on us, or to *expect* them on the ground that, in our weak judgment, they seem desirable, would be a presumptuous tempting of Providence. And to neglect the use of any such advantages as that Providence does place within our reach—to disdain all study for the acquisition of knowledge, and

disparage intellectual cultivation, would be to act as an Israelite would have done, who should have disdained to till the ground in the land of Canaan, and looked for a continuation of the miraculous supply of manna.

In that wilderness, which was naturally barren, and which, had it been fertile, the Israelites could not have cultivated, on account of the perpetual wanderings to which they were sentenced, the supernatural supply of manna was most fitly bestowed, both for the relief of their present wants, and for the display of God's power and fatherly superintendence. The attempt to raise corn in that wilderness, would, at that time, have been not only ineffectual and unnecessary, but would also have indicated a foolish and impious doubt of God's promises. But when they arrived in the promised land, they were left to cultivate the ordinary fruits of the earth in the ordinary manner; though with a distinct warning that they were still under the same Divine Government, and that an obedience to God's commands would be necessary to bring His blessing upon their labours.

Let the Christian, then, who would manifest his zeal in the service of his Redeemer, and who has a just sense of the littleness of all worldly goods in comparison of "the kingdom of God and His righteousness," not renounce or neglect such human advantages as he possesses, or has the means of acquiring; but dedicate them to the service of God. All

his faculties and all his studies, however worthless they may be when employed for any other purpose, however debased and polluted, when devoted to the service of sin, become ennobled and sanctified when directed by a pious mind towards a good object. The land of Canaan had been defiled by the wickedness of its first inhabitants; but it became the *Holy Land*, when bestowed upon God's peculiar people. They were not commanded, after extirpating the Canaanites, to let it lie waste, as incurably polluted by their abominations; but to cultivate it, and dwell in it; living in obedience to the divine laws, and dedicating its choicest fruits to the Lord their God.

In the Christian Church the extraordinary gift of the Spirit granted at her first establishment—the manna, as it were, miraculously showered from heaven upon her, during her first wanderings in the wilderness—is no longer bestowed: but she need not, therefore, be apprehensive of want; she is still under the same Divine protection.

A land flowing with milk and honey is before us; a land which has been cultivated indeed by the profane, and whose best gifts have been abused by the ungodly; but which is capable of being sanctified by dedication to the service of God. That land is the field of ancient and modern literature,—of the arts of reasoning and persuasion. Let us not “think scorn of that pleasant land.” Every part of it may be cultivated

with advantage ; for every part of it will produce fruits fit for an offering at the tabernacle of the Most High.

And of course Christ's ministers are required not to labour and study for their own personal edification alone, but for that of the people committed to their charge. They are to teach, as well as to learn ; and to be learners chiefly to qualify themselves as teachers. Though no longer authorized to teach—like Jesus Christ and His Apostles—"as having authority," and claiming immediate inspiration certified by the display of miraculous powers, they are to be the instructors of the people out of the inspired Scriptures, referring them to these records of revelation as the sole unerring rule of faith, and aiding them to understand these aright. "Take heed to yourselves," says Paul to the elders at Miletus (Acts xx.) "and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn you day and night with tears." He does not, you may observe, promise to these elders, (*i. e.*, Christian pastors) whom he had ordained, any direct revelation to themselves individually, such as he had himself received ; nor does

he promise them infallibility and exemption from all possible error ; on the contrary, he foretells that even from among themselves will “ arise men teaching perverse things to draw away the disciples after them ;” nor does he refer them to any infallible Church, either at Jerusalem or at Rome, or to any supposed successor of Peter, to decide with Divine authority on each doubtful question that might arise ; a reference which he surely would have made, had he known of any such infallible tribunal, to check the evils he was foretelling : but he bids them take heed to themselves, and watch, and remember his words to them, in which he had “ set before them all the counsel of God.” And these his words are, by Divine Providence, set before *us* also in his writings ; and Christ’s pastors now, as well as those of old, are left, as *they* were, without direct inspiration, and under the ordinary and more secret guidance of the Holy Spirit, to employ their faculties and exert their diligence in “ feeding the Church of God” with watchful care ; in teaching, and propagating, and defending this faith.

And such a procedure appears precisely analogous to the former dealings of God with the Jewish Church. The Law was first delivered to the Israelites from amidst the miraculous fires of Mount Sinai. “ The Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak unto thee, and believe thee for ever.” This supernatural

manifestation of divine power was required for the first establishment of these institutions. But these very institutions the Israelites were afterwards left, and strictly charged, to *teach*, themselves, to their children.

And it was the same with that later and more glorious dispensation, of which the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai was doubtless a type—the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the disciples on the day of Pentecost—the very festival which commemorated that delivery of the Mosaic Law. The supernatural gift of tongues was both a necessary means for enabling them rapidly to propagate the Gospel over extensive and distant regions, and also served, together with the other miraculous gifts then conferred, to attest the reality of their divine mission. But when such evidence had been afforded as, according to the judgment of the All-wise, was sufficient to establish the truth of Christianity, men were left to learn, and teach, and propagate, the religion by means of the powers which his ordinary Providence has bestowed upon them.

True it is, that merely to understand, however clearly, what the Christian religion is, and to be acquainted with the contents of the sacred books, is but a part, and that the smallest part, of what is required of the Christian. But still it *is* an indispensable part; and it is also the *first* part. For without this, mere fervent devotional feelings, and sincere

religious zeal, when combined with gross ignorance and intellectual weakness, can only lead, as even experience shows us daily, to childish and often hurtful superstition.

What has now been said some may possibly regard as true indeed, but almost superfluous ; on the ground that few, except some ignorant fanatics, empty pretenders to personal inspiration, (more numerous, however, than some persons are aware,) would deny the advantages, and the necessity of a well-educated ministry, qualified to give rational and sound instruction to the people. It may be thought that those practical pretenders might be sufficiently refuted by simply placing before them a Bible ; not (what is often so called) a *translation* of it by human and confessedly uninspired hands, but the Holy Scriptures, as originally written in Hebrew and Greek by the inspired penmen ; and far the greater part of those fanatics would be found unable to interpret or to read one word of the volume.

But though there may not be many who would come forward openly and distinctly to deny the need of human instructors, it is not always so steadily kept in mind, and so earnestly dwelt on, and so much insisted on in practice, as could be wished.

Besides the temptations—the existence of which, and the strength of which, one cannot doubt—of indolence, and of spiritual pride, there are several other

causes tending to produce a practical disregard of those obvious truths to which I have now been calling attention.

One of these causes is, a dread of that misapplication of human reason and of learning, of which but too many instances, in these days especially, are to be met with.

Some men of undoubted learning and ability, and professing to believe in Christianity, have exercised (as I remarked just now) a misdirected ingenuity in explaining away the Scripture-narratives of miraculous occurrences, as merely slightly exaggerated statements of natural events, thus setting up a paradox much more extravagant even than that of rejecting the whole as a string of fabrications; besides leaving behind them (as already observed) the insurmountable difficulty of accounting for the establishment of Christianity *without* miraculous agency. Some, again, display their erudition and acuteness in putting a forced meaning on many parts of Scripture which they torture into a conformity with their own theological systems. And some give elaborate *explanations* of God's dealings with man on many points, which Scripture leaves unexplained; thus, in reality, setting up themselves to know and teach more than was revealed to the Evangelists and Apostles; or, at least, more than they were commissioned to reveal to mankind. Such presumptuous speculators on the "secret

things that belong to the Lord our God," when they find that the illumination from heaven—the rays of revelation—fail to shed such full light as they wish for on Gospel-mysteries, are for bringing to the dial-plate the lamp of human philosophy, to cast the shadow whichever way they will.

All this tends to produce, in many minds, by a natural re-action, certain indistinct, half-smothered feelings of suspicion and aversion towards learning and intellectual eminence altogether : though, in truth, this is as unreasonable as if Chemistry and Pharmacy were to be regarded with distrust, on the ground that some persons have availed themselves of their knowledge and skill to compound subtle poisons. True it is, according to the wise remark of the illustrious Bacon, that "men often make an ill use of some art they possess, merely lest it should be idle." A man may certainly be a profound Greek or Hebrew scholar, an expert logician, and well versed in various departments of science and literature, and may make all these qualifications subservient to the cause of infidelity, or of some pernicious heresy : but they are not therefore the less valuable qualifications, nor the less capable of being turned to good account. And we should remember—what I think is recorded for the purpose of most important instruction to Christians in every Age,—that the very miraculous gifts bestowed on the early Christians—those gifts by means of which the Gospel

was first propagated, and which were expressly sent for that sole purpose—even these were, as we learn from the epistle now before us (ch. xiv.), abused by some of the Corinthians into an occasion of strife, envy, and vain glory.

But evidently human learning and human reason have their own proper office, which they ought not to exceed, in what pertains to religion; namely (1.), to decide what is or is not to be regarded as Holy Scripture, and (2.), what it is that that teaches; but not to *add* to it any human devices, nor to wrest it into an agreement with philosophical theories and conjectures. To do so may be called “rationalism,” but is a procedure decidedly *irrational*.

Another cause, doubtless, which has contributed to the undue disparagement of all employment of human means in what relates to religion, is the claim of the unreformed Churches to prescribe, absolutely, and on their own authority, the rule of Christian Faith; requiring men to forego all exercise of private judgment, and to receive doctrines either independently of Scripture, or based on interpretations of Scripture that are to be received as final and decisive, and not to be questioned. This claim evidently implies an assumption of infallibility. For, Scripture itself being admitted to contain an infallible revelation of Divine truth, any *interpretations* of it which are to be acquiesced in without inquiry by every Christian, and

any *additions* to it which are to be accepted by all as no less essential portions of the faith, must of course be no less than infallible. And since of this infallibility no proofs can be given, and Scripture consequently is appealed to by Protestants, as the sole unerring standard by which all doctrines are to be proved, hence some have been led to use such language as tends to keep out of sight the proper office of a Church and its ministers to afford *instruction* to the People,—language which would seem to imply that each individual Christian is to take the Bible in his hands, and to make out from that a system of religion for himself, without any guidance or assistance from any one.

True it is that no Christian community does act on such a principle; but it is no less true that the kind of expressions some Protestants are accustomed to use, does tend (besides giving a handle to their opponents) to foster an undue disparagement and neglect of intellectual cultivation and well-directed study.

I have said that the system of leaving each individual Christian entirely to himself, is one which in reality is never practically adopted. Multitudes of tracts, commentaries, expositions, and religious discourses, are put forth and assiduously circulated by Christians of all denominations. And the Scriptures themselves would be inaccessible to a very great majority of mankind, but for the translations supplied by the

learned for the use of the unlearned. And a translator who claims no inspiration, is, manifestly, a human *instructor* of the people as to the sense of Scripture.

And not only every translator, but even every editor also, is, to a certain extent, an expounder of the meaning of every book. For the *Punctuation*, on which the sense of a passage will often very greatly depend, he has to regulate according to his own judgment of the author's meaning. To take one instance out of a multitude that might be given: the words of Paul (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15), are made to signify, according to our mode of punctuation, that the *Church* is the "pillar and ground of the truth;" but the very same words, according to another punctuation (which I have no doubt is the right one), signify that "a pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy great, is the mystery of godliness."

On the whole, the office of a human uninspired instructor is nearly analogous to that of a *judge*. A judge ought to be an able lawyer; but if he exercise his ability and learning in *altering or making* laws, he is departing from his own province and usurping that of a legislator. His office is to learn accurately what the actual law really *is*, and to explain this to the jury, who are thereupon to find a verdict according to the best of their judgment. But neither of them must presume to enact laws, or to depart from those enacted by the supreme Legislature.

As for our own Church, what her judgments has been on these points, is manifest. Had our Reformers designed, on the one hand, that each individual should be left to instruct himself as he best could, out of Scripture, they would have merely published a translation of the Bible, and appointed no order of men charged to instruct the people out of the Scriptures, and set apart for that office, after having been suitably educated and examined as to their qualifications; and the Ministers they appointed would have been merely required to go through certain prescribed ceremonies in a decorous manner. Had they, on the other hand, designed that the People should receive implicitly, and acquiesce in without inquiry, whatever should be taught them by the Priests, not presuming to examine Scripture for themselves and endeavour to learn its meaning, then they would have left the Scriptures in the original languages, or in some language understood only by the learned. The actual procedure, therefore, of our Reformers, clearly indicates their deliberate decision (which, moreover, they have distinctly announced in the article), that to the Holy Scriptures alone, as to Divine authority, must we resort for *proof* of all essential Christian doctrines; but that human aids are to be employed in order to the right understanding of the Scriptures.

In all other departments of knowledge men hardly ever fall into that confusion of thought, which, in

this, one sometimes meets with. Any student, *e. g.*, of Mathematics, or of any branch of Natural Philosophy, will always seek the aid of some well-qualified Tutor or Professor; and yet he would be thought to have studied in vain, if he should ever think of taking on trust any mathematical or physical truth on the word of his instructors. On the contrary it is their very office and object to teach him how,—by demonstration or by experiment,—to verify each point himself.

And even so, our Reformers, while claiming no infallibility, and while encouraging men to “prove all things and hold fast that which is good,” and referring them to Scripture as the only source of unerring proof, yet did not lose sight of the teaching office of a Church. They knew that to appeal to the Scriptures, yet leaving these untranslated into our own language, would be no better than a mockery; yet while providing translations, they did not set up any of *them* as a standard of faith. The “Holy Writ” to which they appealed was that which is strictly so called,—the *original* writings of the Apostles and Evangelists; not the *versions* of these, which are confessedly a human work. As for what is called our Authorized Version of the Bible, *i. e.*, authorized for *public reading* in the congregation, that, as is well known, was not composed till long after the Articles had been drawn up which declare Holy Scripture to

be the sole rule of faith. It is not to *that*, nor to any *translation*, that our Reformers refer as their rule of faith; but to the inspired Original itself. And all members of our Church are left free, for their own private use, to make, or to read, any translation they choose. And by comparing together different translations made by independent, and sometimes by rival, hands, they are furnished with a plain proof, quite accessible to the mere English reader, that there was no conspiracy of learned men *combining* together to falsify the sense of Scripture.

But our Reformers (as I before observed), did not judge it sufficient to place the Bible before the people; but they also took measures to provide them the aid of competent instructors. They knew that of all the books of the New Testament there is none that was addressed to children, or to adults totally ignorant of Christianity, and needing a regular introduction to the first rudiments of it; all being addressed to baptized Christians, in order that (in Luke's words) "they might know the certainty of those things wherein they had been instructed" [catechized]. And they knew also that it would take more than the whole life of the most assiduous student, *now*, to place him even on a *level*, in many points, with those plain men who were the *hearers* of Jesus and His Apostles. Let any man have acquired something approaching to that knowledge of the languages in which the Prophets and

Apostles spoke and wrote, which their hearers had from the cradle,—let him have gained by diligent study a knowledge of those countries, customs, nations, events, and other circumstances with which they had been familiar from childhood,—and let him thus have enabled himself, by a diligent comparison of the several parts of Scripture with each other, to understand the true meaning of passages which were *simple and obvious* to men of *ordinary* capacity *eighteen centuries* ago, and he will be far more learned than it is possible for the generality of mankind to be *now*.

It is evidently necessary, therefore, that means should be used for ascertaining the competency of those who are to be instructors of the people. And we must require of them not only the requisite amount of knowledge and intellectual culture (besides their moral qualifications) but also their agreement with our Church in fundamental doctrines.

For, a mere acknowledgement, however sincere, of the Divine authority of Scripture is common to all professed Christians, though some adopt such widely different interpretations of it, as must preclude their being members of the same Church.

Trinitarians, and Arians and Socinians, those who hold to two Sacraments, and to seven, and those who reject all, and many others who could not possibly join in religious worship, yet agree in acknowledging Scripture. No religious Communities, therefore, could

possibly subsist without applying, in some way or other, some test besides the very words of Scripture. Some Churches, indeed, do not reduce any such test to writing, or express it in any *fixed* form, so as to enable every one to know beforehand precisely how much he will be required to bind himself to. But, nevertheless, those Churches do apply a test, and very often a much more stringent, elaborate, and minute test, than our Liturgy and Articles. In such Communities, the candidate-pastor of a congregation is not, indeed, called on to subscribe in writing a definite Confession of Faith, drawn up after mature deliberation, and publicly set forth by common authority; but he is called upon to converse with the leading members of the congregation, and satisfy them as to the soundness of his views; not, of course, by merely repeating texts of Scripture;—which a man of *any* views might do, and do honestly;—but by explaining *the sense* in which he understands the Scriptures.

And thus it is that tests of some kind or other, written or unwritten [*i. e.*, transmitted by oral tradition fixed for the whole body, or variable, according to the discretion of particular Governors], are, and must be, used in every Christian Church.

But we do not venture to exclude from the Christian Covenant—only from our own Church, those who radically differ from us in their interpretation of

Scripture. The inspired messengers of the Most High are alone authorized to demand from all, as a condition of salvation, the reception of the truths revealed to them. But every Christian Community is authorized and bound to provide for its members the best human instruction that is attainable, and to secure as far as possible, a unity of doctrine in fundamental points in the instructors appointed.

Such then, was the course of procedure adopted by our Reformers with a view to guard against the two opposite errors, of either leaving the people without guidance and instruction in what pertains to religion, or again, of requiring implicit acquiescence in mere human authority. And it is worth remarking that both of these errors, opposite as they appear, tend in practice to the very same result,—the general prevalence of religious ignorance. For, when men are taught to receive their faith implicitly on the bare word of those placed over them, the guides to whose authoritative direction the people are thus left, soon come to think that they themselves also may as well be content to follow the guidance of their predecessors, instead of being at the pains to “prove all things” by a laborious search into the Scriptures. They deem it enough to acquiesce in the judgment of the ancient Fathers; and to ascertain this from the statements of commentators, and compilers from the Fathers,—from abridgements of these compilations,—

and ultimately from brief compendiums framed from these abridgements ; so that, in the end,—and that, no remote end,—the wise and learned, on whom the mass of the people are implicitly to rely, become *unwise* and *unlearned*, there being no one to detect their deficiencies ; ignorant of Scripture, of which they were left to be the authoritative interpreters,—ignorant of it, in fact, from that very cause ;—and in short, “ blind leaders of the blind.”

As for the details of the Church-system by which our Reformers sought to effect the objects they had in view, it would have been superfluous, even if the limits of the present occasion did not forbid it, to enter into a description and defence of them. Suffice it to say,—and I do think it may be said with truth—that the means provided among us for securing an efficient Ministry are well calculated for that object, and likely to insure it, provided only the individuals concerned will do their own respective duties as well as may fairly be expected of fallible, mortal Man. And this is all that can be said of any systems and institutions conducted by human beings, in all departments of life. No political Constitution, *e. g.*, can secure good government if there is an utter want of knowledge, or of ability, or of integrity in those who administer it. And if those with whom rests (whether under our own system, or that of any other religious community) the appointment to the highest

and to the subordinate Church offices, should through carelessness, or from corrupt motives, fill those offices with incompetent or otherwise unfit men, there is no Church system that can either render such an evil impossible, or avert the bad consequences of it. To attempt constructing a ship that should move *itself* through the water, without wind, or oars, or any other motive power; or building a house on such a system of architecture that it should stand firm, though framed of utterly unsound materials,—would not be any greater absurdity than to think of devising some system, either political or ecclesiastical, that should keep *itself* in good order, and work well, independently of all human agency.

Let each individual then, whether lay-member or minister of our Church, and whether filling a higher or a lower office in it, instead of framing utopian schemes for some system of unattainable perfection, strive earnestly and pray for Divine grace, to fulfil his own particular duties in the particular station in which he is himself placed, under a deep sense of his own individual responsibility.

I am now called on to advert, in conclusion, to what is not at all foreign from the present occasion, or from all that I have just been saying. The collections made to-day in this, as in the other Churches of the diocese, will be applied to the purpose of a most important charity, the Additional Curates' Fund

Society. It is an Institution which, I cannot doubt, would not have been so very inadequately supported by the members of our Church, but for their ignorance of its existence, or, perhaps, some misapprehension of its character. Some, perhaps, imagine that its object is to ease the Incumbents of some portion of their labour or of their expenses. But this is an utter mistake. Its object is to provide pastoral ministrations for those who must otherwise remain wholly destitute of any: in districts having a considerable Protestant population, lying for the most part in parishes whose revenues are insufficient even for the decent maintenance of the Incumbent. *E. G.*, among the many parishes to which the Society (though with scanty means), has extended its aid, one, twenty miles by twenty-four, with a Church population of six hundred and fifty, yields a net income of £34 : 10. Another of three thousand acres extent, containing above five hundred Protestants, yields a net income of £34. And a multitude of other, even stronger cases, might be stated. When mighty efforts for the conversion of the heathen, or of others whom we wish to rescue from religious error, are liberally supported (as they deserve to be), it would be a strange inconsistency if the still stronger claims, and no less pressing need, of our countrymen and fellow-churchmen should continue to be, I must say, so shamefully neglected as they have hitherto been. I exhort, therefore,

all who have any real regard for the religion they profess,—any gratitude to the good Providence which has placed the means of grace within their own reach,—to testify this, practically and publicly, by supporting this Society. And I exhort them not merely to contribute whatever they can spare, once for all, on such an occasion as this, but to become regular annual subscribers, of more or less, according to their means, to an Institution which is permanent, and needs continued annual supplies. And I would exhort them, lastly, instead of making any boast of their liberality in doing this, to return their fervent thanks to Him from whom they have received all that they possess, for deigning to receive back from them a small portion of it as an offering well-pleasing in His sight, for the benefit of the fellow-members of the body of Christ.

ESSAY

ON

CHRISTIAN SELF-DENIAL;

AS APPENDED TO THE FIFTH EDITION OF

“ESSAYS ON SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WRITINGS OF THE
APOSTLE PAUL.”

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ESSAY X.

ON SELF-DENIAL.

§ 1. MUCH of what is said, in the writings of the Apostle Paul and in other parts of Scripture, concerning Christian “self-denial,” and again, concerning “mortification,” — and much also that we read in various places relative to “Fasting,” have undoubtedly presented to some minds a considerable difficulty: not merely speculative difficulty, but practical, and leading to great diversity of views and of conduct, and sometimes to distressing doubt and perplexity in reference to Christian duty.

I cannot but attribute great part of the discrepancy and perplexing uncertainty that has arisen both on this and on several other points, to the habit cherished by some persons of reading the Scriptures — assiduously indeed — but without any attentive reflection, and studious

endeavour to ascertain the real sense of what they read : concluding that whatever impression is found to be left on the mind after a bare perusal of the words, must be what the sacred writers designed. They use in short little or none of that care which is employed on any other subject in which we are much interested, to read through each treatise consecutively as a whole ;—to compare one passage with others that may throw light on it ; and to consider what was the general drift of the author, and what were the occasions, and the persons he had in view.

In fact, the real *students* of Scripture, properly so called, are, I fear, fewer than is commonly supposed. The theological-student is often a student chiefly of some human system of Divinity fortified by *references* to Scripture introduced from time to time as there is occasion. He proceeds—often unconsciously—by setting himself to ascertain, not, what is the information or instruction to be derived from a certain narrative or discourse of one of the Sacred Writers, but what aid can be derived from them towards establishing or refuting this or that point of

dogmatic Theology. Such a mode of study surely ought at least not to be exclusively pursued. At any rate, it cannot properly be called a *study of Scripture*.

There is in fact a danger of its proving a great *hindrance* to the profitable study of Scripture. For so strong an association is apt to be established in the mind between certain expressions and the *technical* sense to which they have been confined in some theological System, that when the student meets with them in Scripture, he at once understands them in that sense, in passages where perhaps an unbiassed examination of the context would plainly show that such was not the author's meaning. And such a student one may often find expressing the most unfeigned wonder at the blindness of those who cannot find in Scripture such and such doctrines which appear to him to be as clearly set forth there as words can express; which perhaps they are, on the (often gratuitous) *supposition*, that those words are everywhere to be understood exactly in the sense which he has previously derived from some human system;—a system through which, as through a discoloured medium, he

views Scripture. But this is not to take Scripture for one's guide, but rather to make one's self *a guide* to Scripture.

Others again there are who are habitual readers of the Bible, and perhaps of little else; but who yet cannot properly be said to *study* anything at all on the subject of religion; because, as was observed just above, they do not even attempt to exercise their mind on the subject, but trust to be sufficiently enlightened and guided by the mere act of perusal, while their minds remain in a passive state. And some, I believe, proceed thus, on principle; considering that they are the better recipients of revealed truth the less they exercise their own reason.

But this is to proceed on a totally mistaken view of the real province of Reason. It would indeed be a great error to attempt *substituting* for Revelation, conjectures framed in our own mind, or to speculate on matters concerning which we have an imperfect knowledge imparted to us by Revelation, and could have had, without it, none at all. But this would be, not to use, but to abuse, our rational faculties. By the use of our senses, which are as much the gift of the

Creator as anything else we enjoy—and by employing our reason on the objects around us, we can obtain a certain amount of valuable knowledge. And beyond this, there are certain other points of knowledge unattainable by these faculties, and which God has thought fit to impart to us by his inspired messengers. But *both* the Volumes—that of Nature, and that of Revelation—which He has thought good to lay before us, are to be carefully studied. On both of them we must diligently employ the faculties with which He, the Author of both, has endued us, if we would derive the full benefit from his gifts.

The Telescope, we know, brings within the sphere of our vision much that would be undiscernible by the naked eye: but we must not the less employ our eyes in making use of it; and we must watch and calculate the motions, and reason on the appearances, of the heavenly bodies which are visible only through the telescope, with the same care we employ in respect of those seen by the naked eye.

And an analogous procedure is requisite if we would derive the intended benefit from the pages

of inspiration ; which were designed not to save us the trouble of inquiring and reflecting, but to enable us, on some points, to inquire and reflect to better purpose ;—not to supersede the use of our reason, but to supply its deficiencies.^a

On those points above alluded to, I cannot but think that a moderate degree of thoughtful study of Scripture,—not taken at random, in detached passages, as if we were consulting the “*Sortes Biblicæ*,” but examined in the same way in which we endeavour to get at the true sense of any author on a subject which we are really anxious to understand,—will enable us, through divine help, to escape those perplexities and errors into which many have fallen.

§ 2. To begin then with our Lord’s own declaration respecting the self-denial required of his followers : we find that, at a time when great multitudes were crowding after Him, in eager expectation of the speedy commencement of the Kingdom of Heaven, “having called the people unto Him, with his disciples also, He said unto

^a I have treated more fully on this point in Essay iii. § 5, Fourth Series.

them, Whosoever will^b come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me : for whosoever will^b save his life shall lose it ; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it."

The warning He here gives of the trials and sufferings to be encountered and the sacrifices to be made, by those who would be truly his disciples, is of a piece with others which He gave from time to time, both to the "People"—the multitudes who were as yet doubting hearers of his discourses,—and to those who had joined the number of his followers.

All parties were agreed in expecting that if He were indeed the Christ, He would shortly enter on a triumphant temporal kingdom, and would reign with his adherents in earthly splendour and prosperity, exempt from all dangers and afflictions. Such was, and is to this day, the expectation of the Jews respecting the Messiah's kingdom. This was their inter-

^b The Original has θέλει : "whosoever is *desirous*," &c. It is remarkable that the same words which in Mark are rendered "whosoever *shall* lose," are rendered, in the corresponding passage of Matthew, "whosoever *will* lose." The former is evidently the right rendering of ὅς ἀν ἀπολέσῃ.

pretation of the Prophecies concerning that kingdom. And their expectation was strengthened by the ancient history of their nation; the Lord having governed them of old by a system of temporal rewards and punishments; promising, and giving, victory, wealth, and worldly peace, to those who served Him faithfully; which promises, and many signal fulfilments of them, we find recorded in the Old Testament.

It is impossible therefore to doubt (and this is a circumstance very important to be remarked) that any *impostor* seeking to raise a party among the Jews by professing to be the long-looked-for Messiah, would have been sure to fall in with their expectations, by promising to his followers, triumph over all enemies, and every kind of worldly prosperity: as was in fact what was actually held forth by the many false-christs of whom Jesus prophesied, and who arose not long after.

And an *Enthusiast* would hardly have failed to take the same course. He would have been sure to fancy himself just such a triumphant Messiah as the imagination of all the Jewish People had been so long and so fondly imagining; and would accordingly have had his own day-

dreams filled with those visions of temporal success and splendour which had been so long and intimately associated with the idea of the Messiah's Kingdom.

And indeed universally, any impostor or enthusiast will be likely to promise his followers temporal success as a sign of divine favour; as was done by Mahomet, who was probably a mixture of the two characters. But much more would this have been the case with a *Jewish* impostor or enthusiast, considering how deeply rooted, in the Jews, was the notion that victory and worldly prosperity was a mark of divine favour, and would most especially distinguish the promised Christ.

Jesus on the contrary laboured to repress all such expectations; and held forth a prospect of persecutions and hardships, such as would, instead of attracting, tend to repel the greater part of his countrymen; not only through the reluctance men feel to encounter dangers and sufferings, but also, besides this, through the "*offence*" (as it is called in the New Testament)—the shock to their prejudices—thus produced, and the consequent difficulty they had in believ-

ing that that *could be* the true Kingdom of God, which was so opposite to their expectations.^c “There went great multitudes with Him,” says Luke,^d “and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife, &c., yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple: and whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish. So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

^c “Thus did the Saviour come ‘unto his own, and his own received Him not;’ thus was He ‘despised and rejected of men;’ and thus were the prophecies fulfilled that not only ‘the Christ should *suffer*,’ but that the very circumstance of his being a sufferer should be interpreted as a proof of divine disfavour: ‘We did esteem Him smitten, *stricken of God*, and afflicted; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him.’” — *Essays, Fourth Series*, p. 293.

^d Chap. xiv. 25.

We find then Jesus proceeding not only in a different, but in a totally opposite way to that which might have been looked for from an impostor or an enthusiast; discouraging the expectations which either of those characters would have cherished; and holding out such prospects to his followers as would be likely, humanly speaking, to dishearten them; and which in fact must have overthrown the religion altogether if it had not been supported by supernatural power. And thus a proof is afforded to any plain Christian possessing common sense and an acquaintance with the Bible, that Jesus must have come from God.

§ 3. Another important point to be remarked in reference to this part of our Lord's teaching, is, that the "self-denial" He is speaking of consists not in *self-inflicted* sufferings, undergone as acceptable in God's sight,—in sacrifices and privations voluntarily endured without any further object, but merely for their own sake, as a part of christian-virtue; or of dangers or death encountered when they might be avoided without any desertion of the Christian cause. He is

speaking of the hardships and dangers his disciples would have to encounter in *preaching the Gospel*; of the cruelties that would be *inflicted* on them by his enemies *for adhering to Him*, (“if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you,”)—of the enmity they would incur “for his Name’s sake.” But He manifestly says nothing—whatever some Christians may have conjectured as to his *meaning*—of their inflicting on *themselves* any kind of pain, as being, for its own sake, and simply as pain, a laudable service.

Criminals on whom was inflicted the horribly barbarous sentence of crucifixion, were compelled to carry their own “cross” to the place of execution; and again, for minor offences, the Romans often sentenced a criminal simply to carry a cross.^e And from this it is that Jesus draws his metaphor, “Let him take up his cross and follow me;” that is, let him be prepared to endure patiently whatever sufferings may be *laid on him* in his Christian course. The precept

^e Whence “*furcifer*,” “cross-bearer,” was a common term of reproach among the Romans, applied to the vilest characters.

is not, it should be observed, “let him bear *a* cross,” or “*the* cross,” but “*his* cross;”^f *i. e.* that which is *allotted* to him. So also, in the parables employed of a man going to build, and of a king about to make war, and who do not fail, if they are prudent, to count the cost beforehand, we may observe that the *cost* to be computed is the *unavoidable* expense of the undertaking. They do not regard the expenditure as a thing desirable in itself, and to be sought on its own account, or incurred unnecessarily; but they consider how much it is *requisite* to sacrifice in order to accomplish the object.

And the very *strength* of some of our Lord’s expressions,—the hyperbolical and paradoxical form which they often assume—serves, and was doubtless designed to serve, the purpose (in this as in many other cases)^g of guarding us against mistaking his meaning. If He had bid us merely “hate” riches and ease and comfort, He might have been understood to mean that Christians would be the more acceptable to Him for

^f Τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ.

^g See Essay VIII.

renouncing private property,^h and exposing their bodies to the sufferings of cold and hunger, and scourging themselves with knotted cords, according to the “discipline” (as it is called), of some fanatics, or, like the Hindoos at this day, plunging into their flesh iron hooks by which they suspended and violently swung round. But when He says that a man must “hate his father and mother,” and all those to whom duty as well as affection most bind him, “yea, and his own life also,” we plainly see—since He evidently could not have been enjoining both *unnatural cruelty*, and *suicide*—that He must have been inculcating the duty of being ready to sacrifice both our strongest attachments, and even life itself, when *called on* to do so *in his cause*;—when regard for friends, or love of life, shall stand in the way of our devotedness to Him;—when, as it would often happen in the times of persecution, a man was obliged to make choice between the two, and renounce either the Gospel or the most valued goods of this life, and life itself.

In short, the “self-denial” He required

^h See note at the end of Sermon II. on “leaving all to follow Jesus.”

was, a readiness to give up without hesitation anything that might “offend,” as the Scripture phrase is; anything that might prove a hindrance, “a stumbling-block” in the path of Christian duty. And this He expresses in another place by saying, “If thine eye *offend* thee, pluck it out: . . . if thy right hand *offend* thee, cut it off and cast it from thee.” He does not tell us that it is, simply and absolutely, a good thing to part with the eye or the hand,—*i. e.* to sacrifice what we are strongly attached to—merely because the sacrifice is painful; but when some highly-prized object is an *impediment* [“stumbling-block”] in our Christian course: in short, when Christian duty requires the sacrifice.

§ 4. Such appears to have been, according to the most obvious sense of his words, our Lord’s teaching of self-denial. Let us compare this, again, and rather more particularly, with what might have been expected from an impostor or an enthusiast. The most obvious course for such a person to have taken, especially a Jew, addressing Jews, would have been (as

was remarked above) to promise his followers earthly triumph and prosperity: and if he perceived that it was necessary to prepare them to encounter opposition, he would assure them at least that the struggle would end, if they did but show courage, in temporal victory, glory, wealth, and enjoyment. These things are naturally the objects of human desire: and a promulgator of any religious system that should require little or no self-denial from his followers, and which should promise them, along with the consolations of piety, the free indulgence and gratification of their natural desires—such a man would, with a moderate share of plausible eloquence, be likely to find willing hearers.

But it is very important to remark that there is in mankind another, and a much more strange kind of tendency;—a craving for self-torture;—for self-denial in the sense of sacrificing what is agreeable, and submitting to self-inflicted suffering, simply because it is *painful*, and on the supposition that pain, and especially gratuitous endurance of it, is, in itself, acceptable to God.

To enter fully into the investigation of the causes of this disposition in mankind would lead

into too wide a field of discussion. But there can be no doubt that it arises in great measure from men's observing that there are so many cases in which that which every one perceives to be right conduct, necessarily involves some sacrifice of present gratification. *Painful toil* is often requisite for a man to perform the obvious duty of honestly providing for his family : wounds and death must be encountered in fighting for one's Country : riches must on many occasions be sacrificed by one who would preserve his integrity : and the like in many other cases. Now admiration being excited by the *self-denying* fortitude which, in such cases, a virtuous man displays, men are thus led to associate in their minds the ideas of *virtue* and of *pain*, till their admiration is at length transferred to self-denial in itself. Perceiving that Providence has appointed that in so many cases men must, in order to perform their duty, encounter pain without shrinking, they are at length led to conclude that the voluntary endurance of pain, without any ulterior object, must be acceptable to God.

I do not say that this is the sole cause,—but it is

evidently one cause—of the notion I am alluding to. Be this however as it may, of the fact there can be no doubt. We find traces of this feeling in almost every Age and Country. We find the ancient Canaanites sacrificing their children to Moloch ; and the priests of Baal “cutting themselves *after their manner* with knives and lancets” at his altar. We find the modern pagans of India lacerating their flesh, making vows not to lie down for a certain number of years, but to sleep standing against a tree, or to submit to various other fantastic self-tortures ; drowning themselves in the Ganges, burning themselves alive, and practising other modes of self-immolation. Among the Mahometans again, as well as the Pagans, we find the religious devotees called Fakeers clothing themselves in filthy rags, and living as mendicants. And we find the Mahometan Fast of Ramadan kept for a whole month with such rigour, that from sunrise to sunset they abstain not only from all food but even from water, in a climate of parching heat.

And very early in the Christian world we find men renowned for their holiness in proportion to their self-inflicted sufferings. We read

of some who excited admiration by restricting themselves not only to bread, but to bread mixed with ashes, on purpose to render it distasteful: we find them clothing themselves with sackcloth purposely kept in a state of disgusting filth; standing day and night on the top of a pillar; lying on beds of flints, and taking precautions to have their natural rest, even there, interrupted; excluding the light of day, and imprisoning themselves in dungeons; besides scourgings and a great variety of other modes of self-torture, only to be exceeded by those of the Hindoo idolaters.ⁱ

There can be no doubt then, I say, of the fact, that there is a tendency in human nature to regard pain,—privation—in short “mortification” in the popular sense of the word, (which, as I shall hereafter have occasion to point out, is totally different from the Scripture-sense), especially when voluntary, and gratuitously self-inflicted, as acceptable to God. The notion evidently is not derived either from Christianity as such, or from Mahometanism, or from Paganism, or from any particular form of Paganism;

ⁱ See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

since it is found in these various religions; but from some tendency in human nature itself.

It appears then that not only an active and eloquent religious teacher who should proclaim a religion of *self-indulgence* and worldliness, would be likely to gain converts, but also, any superstitious fanatic or crafty impostor who should exhibit in himself and recommend to others excessive *austerity* and self-torture, would be likely to excite admiration of his supposed holiness and faith in his pretensions.

And accordingly, since these two,—seemingly most opposite—systems, that of complete self-indulgence, and that of ascetic self-mortification, have, each something to recommend it to the human mind, one might expect that any one teaching a religion either invented or modified by Man, would adopt one or the other of these two courses.

§ 5. In fact, we find that *in most cases the two are combined*. Certain persons, or certain seasons, we find *set aside* as it were, for the practice of austerities; and a kind of *compensation* is made by allowing the utmost laxity of morals in other

persons, or at other times. Thus the rigid fast of Mahometans (above alluded to) during one month, is a sort of compensation for general sensuality; and the austerities habitually practised. (or supposed to be practised) by their Fakeers, obtain for them the high veneration of the multitude, but are not at all regarded as an *example* for the multitude to follow.^k The supposed eminent holiness of these, and of other similar ascetics in other religions, induces the generality of the people, not, to emulate their practice, but to seek their prayers and blessing. And by none are such ascetics usually more venerated than by those whose own lives are spent in unbridled licentiousness. Such a system of religion consequently is calculated to suit persons of the most various, and even opposite dispositions. And it will generally be found that the prevalence in any religion of general laxity of morals, and of severe austerities, will nearly keep pace with each other. The greater the merit attached to the self-inflicted sufferings of certain devotees, the greater will be the indul-

^k See Essay, (3d Series,) on Vicarious Religion.

gence for a prevailing, habitual, disregard of the general rules of morality. And again, the stricter the requisition of severe Fasts and other mortifications, at certain seasons, according to certain prescribed regulations, the less is the general self-restraint at other times.

Those ancient Heathen above-mentioned, who lacerated their flesh, and burned their children, in honour of their gods, were not only most licentious in their lives, but had special *religious festivals*, which were regularly celebrated by intemperance and profligacy. And the modern Hindoos, according to the best accounts, seem to be as remarkable for the absence of moral restraint from their religion, as for the excessive extravagance and variety of its mortifications;—the self-inflicted penances above alluded to. The same gods whom they believe to be propitiated by severe fasts and mangling of the flesh, and self-sacrifice—these same imaginary gods not only are not represented as requiring of their votaries habitual temperance, and purity, and honesty, and veracity, but are even, some of them, the acknowledged patrons of robbers and murderers by profession: and the very worship

of many of them is celebrated in festivals of the grossest licentiousness.¹

And the further any one extends his inquiries into the history of all nations, ancient and modern, the more reason he will see to be convinced that any religion either wholly of Man's devising, or mixed, and modified, and corrupted with human inventions, is likely to be characterised by those features I have described: it will generally be found to place religious excellence more in self-inflicted sufferings than in moral duty;—to prize more that *mortification* which consists in gratuitous endurance of pain and privation, without any further object, than that "mortification" which our Scriptures speak of,—the habitual repression of evil passions.

The word "mortify," originally signifies—as well as the two Greek words of which it is a translation—to "put to death." And it is invariably used by the sacred writers (doubtless in allusion to the *death* of Christ for his People, whom He came to "save from their sins") in the sense of suppressing and subduing sinful pro-

¹ See Ward, On the Religion of the Hindoos.

pensities, and bringing the body into subjection to the Spirit. Never once do they employ it in reference simply to pain or privation, as such. In our ordinary language, on the contrary, the word is commonly applied to any kind of suffering, simply *as suffering*; in which sense either scanty or unpleasant food, or lying on a bed of stones, scourging, wearing of hair-cloth, or any other infliction of pain, would be called “mortification.”

It would be vain to attempt changing the established language of any country; but much confusion of thought and error are likely to arise from our taking a word in its popular sense in passages of Scripture in which it has invariably a different sense. For instance, the Apostle Paul tells us (Col. iii. 5), “*Mortify* (*νεκρώσατε*) your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness,” &c. And again, “If ye live after the flesh,” (*i. e.* a life of sensuality,) “ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do *mortify* (*θανατοῦτε*) the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” And in the same spirit he says (Rom. vi. 6), “Knowing this, that our Old

Man is *crucified* with Christ, that the body of *sin* might be *destroyed*," &c.; and again (Galat. v. 24), "They that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh, with the affections and lusts."

Now if from Scripture, whose sense seems in this point so very plain, men infer that "mortification" is well-pleasing in God's sight, and then understand "mortification" in the popular sense, as the simple infliction of suffering and privation of every kind, this surely must be from the prevalence of that tendency above alluded to,—the tendency to seek divine favour by self-torture as something in itself acceptable to the Deity.^m

We have seen then what was our Lord's teaching, and again what would have been likely to be the teaching of a superstitious enthusiast, or of a designing impostor. Any one *not* sent from God would have been likely to accommodate himself to the dispositions of man; either by allowing to his zealous disciples a *relaxation of moral obligations*, or by recommending *self-inflicted sufferings* as a laudable service of God,

^m See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

or, most likely, by *both together*. Jesus, on the contrary, does *neither*. He allows of no *exemptions* from moral duty,—no shrinking from dangers and sufferings to be encountered *in his cause*,—no refusal to bear the cross that may be *allotted* to each; and yet never enjoins or encourages any self-inflicted pain, or needless exposure to danger. His religion therefore, as taught by Himself, differs in a most important point from any that ever was devised, either wholly or in part, by men. And this is one of the proofs open to any man of plain common sense, which may furnish an answer to the question, “Was it from Heaven, or of men?”

§ 6. Further proofs, if further can be needed, that the genuine Gospel is distinguished from all human devices by that peculiarity which has been here pointed out,—yet further proof of this, I say, may be furnished by the conduct of Christ’s immediate followers. We find them cheerfully undergoing toils and sufferings of various kinds *in the propagation of the Gospel*;—submitting to imprisonment,—glorying in stripes,—braving various dangers,—“ready, not to

be bound only, but also to die, for the Name of the Lord Jesus,"—so harassed and persecuted that Paul says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." And yet we not only find no mention of any self-inflicted sufferings or privations, but we even find them always taking care to preserve themselves from persecutions and all other outward afflictions, whenever this could be done without any detriment to the great cause they were engaged in;—without denying their Master, or shrinking from his service.

Twice we find Paul pleading his rights as a Roman Citizen, which entitled him to an exemption from bonds and stripes when uncondemned: at Philippi, where he boldly rebuked the magistrates for their illegal infliction of these indignities, and at Jerusalem, where the Chief-Captain Lysias was alarmed into forbearance. How is this to be reconciled with "rejoicing to be thought worthy to suffer the shame of stripes for the name of the Lord Jesus?" Evidently, only in this way: that the "cross" which each disciple was required to bear, was to be *his* cross;—that the endurance of suffering was *then*

only a Christian virtue when it was not self-imposed ; when it was not *avoidable, except* by the abandonment of the Christian cause. The persecutions they were to rejoice in must not be *courted* persecutions, but only such as were, to faithful Christians, inevitable.

And it was the same not with persecution, only, but with every kind of danger and affliction from whatever cause. In the narrative of Paul's voyage to Rome, we find him taking every precaution against the impending dangers, that could have been expected in the most timorous lover of life. Paul, who declares that to him to "die was gain," and that he had "a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better,"—this very man remonstrated with the Centurion against putting to sea at a dangerous season. And afterwards, when the ship strikes, although *it had been revealed to him* that no lives would be lost, yet understands (which is a very remarkable circumstance)ⁿ that this implied the use of all ordinary human means to ensure safety, and that he was bound not to neglect the use of

ⁿ See Essay IV.

these means. He takes measures to prevent the desertion of the mariners, without whom, he tells the Centurion, "*ye cannot be saved.*"

In short, throughout the whole of the sacred narrative, we find the Apostles acting fully up to the spirit of their Lord's instructions; ready to "pluck out the eye," or "cut off the hand," *if it offend;* but not otherwise; ready, each to "bear his cross,"—*his own* cross;—the burden of affliction which Providence might see fit should be laid on him; but no other. We find them, in their Christian warfare, acting the part of good and faithful soldiers; whose duty is to endure cheerfully hardship and toil,—to brave wounds and death,—when *summoned* to do so in the course of their service;—to shrink from nothing that they are *commanded* to do or to bear;—but never to expose themselves wantonly to danger, when *not* commanded;—nor to inflict on themselves, merely in ostentation of their fortitude, any sufferings or privations that have no other object.

Such was the Apostles' interpretation of their Lord's teaching; and such was the example they left us of obedience to Him.

§ 7. How soon, and how much, Christians of later ages perverted that teaching, and departed from that example, is well known. Early introduced, and widely spread, and hard to be eradicated, and easily revived, is the notion of a man's becoming, by a presumptuous "will-worship"—by performance of supposed services that have not been enjoined—a sort of saviour to himself; or of atoning, himself, for his own, and even for his neighbours' sins. And the introduction of such notions and practices into the religion of the Gospel, *contrary* to its original and proper character, shews, more plainly even than the instances of the Pagan religions, how suitable to the "natural-man" is this kind of "will-worship;" and consequently how sure we should have been to find it in the teaching of Jesus, and in the precepts and practice of the Apostles, if these men had not been indeed from God.

Soon did men arise in the Christian Churches, "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," distorting and misapplying the Apostolic precepts and practice which they professed to follow, and pretending to imitate the

Apostles by inflicting on themselves such pains and privations as those Apostles endured patiently when occurring in their path of Christian duty.

The true way to imitate the Apostles is by enduring, like them, not, whatever may appear to us the most admirable display of fortitude, but, whatever trials are *appointed* to each man;—not, by going *out* of our way to create trials for ourselves; but by steadily walking *in* the way which God's Providence has marked out for each of us. Christian Self-denial consists not in volunteering self-torture, but in “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and in living” (not at this or that particular season, but always) “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present life.”

If the amount of pain endured, and the degree of resistance to inclination,—if self-denial in *this* sense—were to be the measure of Christian excellence,—then, the Christian would, in proportion as he advanced, be continually becoming *less* and less acceptable in God's sight. For there can be no doubt that the restraint of bad propensities, and the practice of temperance,

beneficence, gentleness, and every Christian virtue, become continually *easier* as the Christian character improves. Those therefore who adopt such a standard as that just mentioned, — who make self-denial, in the sense of *painful* mortification, the measure of their Christian proficiency—must resort to *self-torture*, and go on continually devising fresh modes of making their service of God as irksome as possible!

And yet, strange as it appears, many are more readily induced to adopt *this* course, than that which the Gospel really points out to us. Habitual self-control, and readiness and firmness in the performance of each *appointed* duty, whether agreeable or painful, is a kind of self-denial which is, as experience shows, more difficult to “the natural man,” than occasional—or even habitual—austerities, and self-imposed hardships and pains.

But for this, more difficult, task—for the practice of truly Christian Self-denial—we have the promised aid of the Holy Spirit which “helpeth our infirmities;” and through that help, the subjugation of evil passions — the

“ mortifying of the deeds of the flesh ”—however painful at first, will continually become easier, in proportion as the Christian-moral-character improves. Obedience to Christ’s commands will continually become, to those “ who are led by his Spirit,” less and less of *self-denial*, because each man’s *self*—his very nature and character—will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ; and his faithful followers will more and more find from their own happy experience that his “ yoke is easy, and his burden light.”

§ 8. A considerable part however of the difficulties which occur to some minds in reference to the present subject, arise from the frequent mention in Scripture of “ Fasting ;” which having been in after times often enjoined, recommended, or practised as a part of “ self-denial ” or “ mortification,” (in the popular sense of those words) and some having hastily taken for granted that it is prescribed, or commended, in Scripture, with *that* view—*i. e.* on the ground that self-inflicted suffering or privation is, as such, an acceptable service—the inference has been drawn, that the

character of our Religion must be, in that point at least, opposite to what has been just above described.

Others again have supposed that Fasting—as distinguished from scourging, wearing of sack-cloth, and all other self-inflicted hardships—is a Positive-Ordinance of the Gospel; or again, that it is a moral-duty, or at least a Christian virtue, and one which we should endeavour, in some way or other, to practise.

And many, I believe, have a sort of vague undefined general impression left on the mind, composed of all these different notions confusedly blended together; which leads to a perplexing and painful state of doubt on the subject. Nothing indeed but confusion of thought, and distressing uncertainty as to conduct, can be the result of an attempt to follow the guidance of Scripture without taking the pains to examine and carefully reflect on what we read. And yet there are persons who, in reference to the present subject, have never even thought of inquiring as to several points which must present themselves to any one who is seeking to obtain distinct notions concerning it.

What is meant by the word “fasting” in Scripture, and whether it is always the *same* thing that is meant in every place where the word occurs,—with *what view* it was in each case practised by those whom we read of as fasting,—whether simply as a self-inflicted *suffering*, or as a *penance*, or as a *discipline* resorted to for the repression of any sinful propensity, or again, merely as an outward sign of mourning,—whether any kind of Fast is *enjoined* in Scripture so as to bind Christians in all ages,—and again, if it *be* a duty, in what manner it is to be performed; and whether it is to be regarded as a natural moral-duty, like that of integrity or beneficence, or of a positive ordinance, like the Jewish Passover or the Christian Eucharist,—all these are questions naturally occurring to the mind of one who is not satisfied with notions utterly vague and confused; and which yet some persons have not even inquired into at all. Nay, one may even meet with persons who have hardly ever thought of considering attentively the difference, generally, between what are called *positive*-precepts and *moral*-precepts;—between things which are right because they

are commanded, and those which are commanded because they are right.

There are many who would probably state this distinction correctly if the question were put to them in the abstract, who yet are perpetually losing sight of it in practice, especially in what relates to the following of apostolic *example*,—copying apostolic *precedents*, &c. On the one hand, natural [moral] duties, being such independently of express command, the precepts relative to these, are to be regarded rather as a “*stirring up* of a pure mind by way of *remembrance*” (2 Pet. iii.) than as the enactment of a new rule; and the examples set before us are rather an illustration of a principle, and an incitement to emulation, than patterns to be minutely copied. None but a disingenuous caviller would require to be told precisely what portion of his income he should give in charity,—on what occasions, and in what mode, he should practise integrity or temperance,—and whether these duties were to be such permanently, or only for a temporary emergency. On the other hand, in respect of things originally and *intrinsically* indifferent—such as rites

and ceremonies, and ecclesiastical regulations of all kinds—we may expect clear commands, and precise directions as to anything that we are to be bound to do; and any recorded practice of the Apostles must be (if so intended) distinctly *declared* to be a *precedent* which all future Ages are strictly bound to conform to. For instance, the command is distinct, to commemorate the Sacrifice of Christ,—to “shew forth the Lord’s death, *till He come*,”—by partaking of bread and wine: but the use of leavened or of unleavened bread, (which latter we know must have been used at the institution of the Rite,) and the retaining or discontinuing of the Love-feasts [Agapæ], which we know used in early times to succeed the Eucharist, and again, the posture of the communicants, and the form of administration—these points, since no distinct directions as to them are given, seem left to the discretion of each Church; and are considered (which is worthy of remark) as thus left at large, even by those who pretend to hold that every apostolic usage is absolutely binding on all Christians for ever. And it is the same with other similar cases. In such points, to follow

“apostolic example” is to “let all things be done to edifying.”

The two opposite errors,—that of expecting, in respect of points of natural morality, to find in Scripture distinct commands and detailed directions as to every case that can arise,—and that of regarding, in respect of things intrinsically indifferent, every recorded, or even suspected, apostolic usage, as a precedent and model from which no Christians must venture ever to depart, though there be no injunction in Scripture to that effect, (which principle however none of those who maintain it have ever fully followed out with honest consistency)—these two opposite errors, each, imply a confounding together of “natural” and “positive” obligation.

And indeed attentive reflection, altogether, and patient and careful study of what Scripture teaches — anything answering to that diligent attention with which any one applies himself to any history, art, or science, which he is anxious to learn,—all this,—as I have observed above,—is what too many men seem to regard as needless, or even as improper, in respect of religious

concerns: as if we were to be instructed in Christian faith and practice by simply opening the Bible at hazard, and taking any passage that happens to meet the eye, and attaching to it any meaning that happens to occur to the mind.

The varieties of practice which have arisen in various Countries and Ages in respect of the present subject are such as might have been expected from the various and often vague and ill-defined notions that have existed in the minds of different persons. Some have considered that fasting is to be practised by Christians as a kind of imitation of the Fast of their Master in the Wilderness at the time of his temptation. And indeed in the greater part of Christendom the commemoration of that event has long been made, partly, by some kind of Fast established as a Church-ordinance: though it can be but a symbolical and figurative reference that any such Fast can have to the event commemorated. It evidently cannot be a direct *imitation* of Christ's *example*; since *his* abstinence, supposing it to have been, as it appears, from food altogether, must have been perfectly mira-

culous : and since we are also expressly told that it was not till the *end* of the forty days that He was assailed by the temptation of hunger.

Again, some have regarded fasting as dependent on the *quality*, others, on the *quantity*, of the food taken ; and others on both : while some again have considered it as consisting in total abstinence from all food. The Mahometans, whose religion is based on the Jewish and the Christian (such as Mahomet found them) take this last view ; and during the fast-month of Ramadan (above alluded to) regard the swallowing of even a drop of water between sunrise and sunset as a violation of the Fast. Of the same character also are reported to be the Fasts of the Abyssinian Christians : while others again lay no restriction even on the use of strong liquors ; and make every thing depend on the distinction between different kinds of meats.

And there prevails a still greater degree (if possible) of variety of opinion, uncertainty, and confusion of thought, as to the *grounds* of the practice ;—whether it is to rest on the authority of Scripture, or of a Church ;—as to the *cha-*

racter of it;—whether it is to be regarded as a *moral* or as a *positive* duty;—and again as to the *object* of it;—whether it is to be observed as a mode of self-inflicted *pain*, (like the flint-bed or the scourge,) and as being on that ground acceptable to God, or again as a mode of bringing the body into subjection to the Spirit, in the way of weakening evil passions and fortifying the intellectual and moral portions of the mind. And the employment (as was observed above) of the word “mortification” in different senses—to denote sometimes the one, and sometimes the other of these two things,—contributes to increase the vagueness and perplexity I have been alluding to. That word is commonly applied, as has been already remarked, in ordinary language,—not (in the Scriptural sense) to the subjugation of sin,—but to any kind of *suffering*, simply, as suffering. And in this sense it has no special reference to *Fasting* more than to any *other* kind of painful privation. Abstinence from food, or confinement to scanty or to unpleasant food, or privation of sleep, or walking barefoot on rugged stones, or kneeling in a painful posture, or wearing of hair-cloth, or

of disgustingly filthy garments, or any other infliction of pain, would equally be called a "mortification."^o

To attempt to discuss fully all the several questions that pertain to this subject would be to enter on too wide a field of inquiry. But something will have been gained if we can but clear up the sense of some of those passages of Scripture which have been indistinctly or erroneously understood, and which have consequently occasioned difficulty and distressing doubt, and erroneous practice.

§ 9. First then, we should mark and set aside all those passages (and there are several) in which "fasting" is spoken of in the sense, simply, of absence of food, or of sufficient food, or of regular meals; without any reference to a *voluntary* act, or any connexion with *religion*.

Such is, for instance, the passage (Acts xxvii.) where, in the course of the narrative of the storm which Paul and his companions encountered on the voyage to Rome, it is mentioned that they had "fasted fourteen days, having

^o See Note A, at the end of this Essay.

taken nothing:" by which of course we must understand merely that they had taken no regular meals in all that time, but, in the midst of the unceasing terror, and exertion, and confusion, occasioned by the tempest, had only occasionally snatched a morsel of food sufficient to sustain life.

This kind of distress,—besides many others,—Paul was frequently exposed to in his many sea-voyages and land-journeys, on occasions not recorded in the book of Acts; as we learn from his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, (xi. 27,) where he speaks of himself as having been "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness," &c.

That the "fastings" of which he is here speaking, are of the description just mentioned, and not, any kind of religious exercise, is plain from the context; as he is manifestly enumerating, not his devotional practices, but his hardships and trials. His "fastings" accordingly—amounting occasionally not merely to pain from hunger and thirst, but to distressing famine,—are mentioned, not, along with prayers and

meditations, but with “perils” and “stripes” and “stoning.” And it is observable also that the “watchings” which he likewise mentions in the same place, have no reference to any sort of *voluntary* exercise. In our version indeed, the word corresponds with that in our Lord’s exhortation to “*watch* and pray;” but in the Original, quite different words are employed. In the exhortation, to “watch” (*γρηγορεῖν*) is to be *vigilant* like a sentinel; in Paul’s description of his sufferings, “watching” (*ἀγρυπνία*) means “privation of sleep,”—“want of repose.” And the same words are employed, in the same manner, when he speaks, in another place, of being “in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in *watchings*, in *fastings*.”

On many occasions again, Fasting,—in the other, and now more popular sense,—*i. e.* voluntary abstinence—is mentioned both in the Old and New Testaments; sometimes as a customary and established sign of *mourning*,—along with wearing of sackcloth, and sprinkling of ashes on the head,—and sometimes again as an ordinary accompaniment of especially solemn *prayer*, according to ancient eastern custom.

Besides many other parts of the Old Testament, we may perceive from the narrative of David's fasting and weeping for his child when it was sick, and of the surprise of his servants at his not fasting after it was dead, how well-known and customary a sign it was both of mourning and of earnest devotion. And the only Fast appointed by the Law of Moses,—that on the great day of Atonement (Levit. xxiii. 26)—in which by the way the word “fast” does not itself occur, nor any special reference to abstinence from food—the Israelites are directed to “afflict their souls,” *i. e.* to keep a day of solemn “mourning.”

Then again, it was also (as I have said) a customary accompaniment of *prayer*, among the Jews, and those who adopted their usages; as we may collect from several incidental notices. For instance, the Prophetess Anna is mentioned as one who served God habitually in the Temple with “fasting and prayer;” and Cornelius the Centurion, as “fasting and praying” in his house when the Angel appeared to him. And several other such cases are incidentally recorded.

Of course, we cannot suppose that Fasting was

an accompaniment of *every* prayer,—else there would have been no need ever to mention it at all;—but only, we may suppose, on those more solemn occasions when a certain time was set apart for a *course* of prayer. And such, I conceive, must have been the “prayer and fasting” alluded to by our Lord in reference to the Demoniac whom the Disciples had failed to relieve. *They* had not, we know, unlimited power (as their Master had) of working miracles. It was *given* them on certain occasions; and the giving of it, was, in some way or other, *intimated* to them; as, on Peter, for instance, the power of walking on the sea, was conferred by his Lord’s command. And we find them sometimes *praying* for the power to perform a certain miracle; as, we may collect, was done by Peter before he raised up Tabitha from death. (Acts ix.) In the case of that Demoniac, it should seem that our Lord tells the disciples they should have not attempted to perform the cure without having first received some clear intimation of their commission to perform it, such as should remove all *doubt* from their minds, (whence he tells them that they failed from *want of faith*; that is, they

proceeded while in a state of uncertainty) and that in order to obtain such assurance they should have first resorted to a course of special, persevering supplication for the miraculous power;—to that, in short, which they would understand Him to mean by “prayer and fasting.”

We find also prayer and fasting mentioned in the Book of Acts on the occasion of the *ordaining* of Ministers; an occasion on which a solemn *course of prayer* (such as, according to Jewish usage, was accompanied by fasting) was to be looked for.

§ 10. What the kind of abstinence was that the Jews were accustomed to use on such occasions, we are nowhere told in Scripture.

It is remarkable that though neither Prayer nor Fasting occupy any considerable place in the Mosaic Law,—no prayer at all being enjoined, except in one passage (Deut. xxvi.) where the Israelite is directed, on the occasion of a festival occurring but once in three years, to implore God’s blessing on his People—yet both Prayer and Fasting *were* practised by the Jews, of their

own accord. It is also remarkable that notwithstanding they did habitually practise the duty of Prayer, yet our Lord deemed it needful to give very frequent and earnest *injunctions* to that effect; exhorting men to “pray always and not to faint,” and enforcing his precepts by several parables; lest, in after-ages, Prayer should fall into disuse. For Fasting, on the other hand, neither He nor his Apostles give any injunction at all, as making it any part of christian duty.

But it was our Lord’s general rule to leave untouched all the existing customs of his own Age and Country, except where they were sinful;—where the Pharisees had “made the Word of God of none effect through their Tradition.”

He censures also the ostentatious *manner* in which both Prayer and Fasting were practised by the Pharisees; exhorting men to make no public display of those devotions which were of a private character. *Public Worship* in the *Temple* and in the Synagogues, it is plain He never meant to forbid; but it is for offering up their prayers in the *streets* and in the *market-place*

that He censures the hypocrites. Those Prayers and Fasts of these men, which were thus ostentatiously displayed, evidently did not profess to be any part of the established public-worship. And when He was asked, reproachfully, why his disciples did not, like those of the Pharisees and of John, practise Fasting, there is no imputation cast on Him for a violation of the *Law*, or neglect of any *public-Ordinance*; but merely wonder and blame are expressed that while He professed to be a religious teacher, his disciples should exhibit, apparently, a less religious mode of life, in one respect, than the followers of John and of the Pharisees.

His answer to this inquiry has reference to what I have above remarked, of Fasting being understood as an accompaniment and sign of mourning: (Matt. ix. 15) "Can the children of the bride-chamber *mourn*" (in Mark ii. 19 the word is "*fast*") "as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then will they fast." A wedding was, we know, a scene of especial festivity among the Jews; with which anything savouring of mourning,

among the Bridegroom's companions, [the "children of the bride-chamber"] would have been inconsistent; but when the Bridegroom (by which it is plain He means Himself) shall be taken from them, "then," says He, "they will fast, in those days."

From this passage it is plain, among other things, that neither our Lord, nor the questioners, had any thought of *self-discipline* as a legitimate purpose of "fasting;" (a notion which arose several Ages after) for in *that* point of view, the disciples would have needed it while their Lord was with them as well as afterwards; so that his reply would have been nothing to the purpose.

It is to be further remarked respecting this passage, that it contains no *precept* as to what his disciples were *enjoined* to do; only a *prophecy* of what *would* take place. It is, however, important to determine aright what it was that the prophecy related to;—what period is denoted by "those days;" since it was a period during which *mourning* is spoken of,—not indeed as a thing *commanded*, but as natural and *suitable* for Christ's disciples.

§ 11. Now some have understood by “those days” all Ages of the Christian-Church subsequent to the departure of Jesus in bodily person from the Earth: comprehending therefore in those days of mourning, the present, and all future time, till his triumphant return to judge the world at the last day. But this is surely to overlook, or greatly to misunderstand, his own words. For in some of his later discourses to the disciples, recorded by John, He dwells very fully and strongly on the sorrow they will feel at the loss of their Master, which sorrow was to be succeeded by *joy*,—*lasting joy*—at his return. “Because I have said, I go my way to Him that sent me sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is *expedient* for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him,” &c. “Ye will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice, and ye will be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into *joy*; and ye now therefore have sorrow; but *I* will *see you again*, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy *no man taketh* from you.” (John xvi. 6 and 20.)

Now the disciples, it is true, had to spend their lives, for the most part, in trials, dangers, indignities, persecutions, and various kinds of hardship. And some have imagined that the period of “mourning” Jesus alludes to,—“then shall they fast in those days”—denotes this life of suffering which awaited them after his departure in the body. But I greatly wonder that any one should so utterly overlook what is said both by Himself and his Apostles. It would indeed be very natural for an ordinary man to regard as a period of *mourning* that life of privation and hardship to which the first preachers of the Gospel were subjected. But far different, and indeed contrary, was the view which *they* themselves and their great Master took of it. The “*mourning*” He alludes to was not on account of bodily afflictions, but on account of the loss of *Him*, their Lord: which sorrow was to be completely and finally removed; their “joy no man was *to take from them*.” But as for worldly troubles and hardships, these were a kind of trial which *He* prepared them *not* to mourn for, but to endure joyfully. “Peace,” says He (John xiv.) “I leave with you; *my*

peace^p I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you. . . . In the World ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the World." And again, "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company, and reproach you; when they shall persecute you for righteousness' sake: *rejoice* in that day, and leap for joy," &c.

And well did the Apostles learn and practise, and inculcate on their converts, the lesson He had taught them. "My brethren," says the Apostle James, "count it all *joy* when ye fall into divers temptations;" *i. e.* trials by persecution. "They departed rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame," &c.^q "I am filled," says Paul,^r "with comfort; I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation," &c. To the World they might appear "of all men most miserable;" but they themselves felt quite otherwise; they were "as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing."

From these and many other passages, but

^p εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν.

^q Acts v. 41.

^r 2 Cor. vii. 4.

much more still, from the general tone of the New-Testament writers, we may plainly see that the days of “mourning” which our Lord alludes to cannot have been the life of hardship which awaited the preachers of the Gospel, nor could have had any reference to such outward afflictions. That time of mourning for their Lord’s absence, was evidently, first, the interval of desponding sorrow between his crucifixion and his appearance after the Resurrection;^s and, secondly, in a less degree, that interval of comparative loneliness, though cheered by hope,—that twilight following the darkness of despondency, and preceding the restoration of a full sunshine—the interval between the Ascension and the day of Pentecost: when their Master was restored to them, not in body, but in Spirit, as the “Comforter who should abide with them for ever.”^t

If indeed it had been a *new* Master,—a *different* Being—that they were then and thence-

^s See Luke xxiv. 17.

^t The title of Paraclete, rendered in the *Gospel* of John, “Comforter,” is applied to Jesus in the first *Epistle*, in which our Version renders it “Advocate.”

forth to be under, though sent by their former Master, their joy would not have been “full :” they would still have mourned the departure of Him in whose service they had originally enlisted. Any one who has a heart for friendship, —who knows what real personal attachment is —knows well that its object is, not certain *qualities* merely, but a *certain individual person*. “Substitute,” —“successor,” —“equal,” —“similar,” —“equally good,” —are words unknown in its vocabulary. The cravings of an affectionate heart can only be satisfied with the *very person* on whom it is fixed. The dejection of the Disciples therefore in the absence of their original Master would never have been wholly removed by any gifts conferred under the dominion of a different Being.

But this—though the language of some writers would lead one to take such a view—is very far from being that view which Jesus taught his Disciples to take, and which they did take, of their condition. On the contrary, He seems to have sedulously guarded them against any such thought. “I will not,” says He, “leave you comfortless ; *I* will come unto you.” “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice :”

and that this cannot refer to the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension is plain from his adding, “Your joy *no man taketh from you.*” And again, “If any man love me, he will keep my saying, and my Father will love him, and *We* will come unto him, and make our abode in Him.”

And in like manner Paul, in speaking of the graces of the Holy Spirit, says, “If any man have not the Spirit of *Christ*, he is none of his :” “The Lord” (*Jesus*) is the [that] Spirit ;
ΤΟ Πνεῦμα.

It is plain therefore that no mourning—no Fast in that sense—was designed to be the habitual condition—the general standing rule—of the Christian Church.

§ 12. As for Fasting of any other description,—whether as an outward sign of mourning on extraordinary occasions, or as an accompaniment of prayer, the Sacred Writers have left the whole matter to the discretion of Christians, whether as private individuals or as Churches. In the course of their narratives they have *recorded*, incidentally, the existing practices ; but have

nowhere given any *injunctions* or directions on the subject. While earnestly inculcating the habitual use of Prayer, both public and private, they have left each *Church* in respect of *public* congregational prayers, and each *individual* Christian in respect of his *private* devotions, to regulate the particular modes of fulfilling that duty, as may to each seem best: so that “all things” (says the Apostle) “be done to edifying.”

A further admonition however is given by the same Apostle (Rom. xiv. 2.) not to judge harshly, or again to speak contemptuously, of one another in respect of these matters. “One man believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.” Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not

^u It is probable the Apostle had here in view, principally at least, the scrupulous dread of some weak brethren of eating something that had been strangled, or that had been offered to Idols. The principle however which he is inculcating is of very general application: namely, that in respect of matters intrinsically indifferent, and on which no positive command has been given, each is to act according to the best of his own judgment, and not presume to condemn or to despise others for not coinciding with him.

him that eateth not, judge him that eateth. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." And again he tells us that meat doth not recommend us to God, for that we are not the better or the worse for eating or for not eating; but that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to the glory of God."

In respect of these points then, as well as many others,^x the inspired Writers have left, as I have said, the determination to the responsible discretion of each Church, or of each individual Christian. And each Church has a right—in respect of such things as are neither distinctly *enjoined* by Scripture or by natural conscience, nor again *at variance* with either of these,—to enact, or abrogate, or alter from time to time, any public Ordinances, according as to each may appear most conducive to edification.

To teach however as a duty, or as a Christian virtue, self-denial, not in the Gospel-sense of the word, but in the sense of pain or privation

^x See Essay II. On the Kingdom of Christ, § 13.

voluntarily undergone, as a thing, in itself, and as such, acceptable to God,—this would be to exceed the legitimate powers of a Church; because it is, as we have seen, *at variance* with the whole spirit of the Gospel-religion. This, and sundry other DEVELOPMENTS (as the modern phrase is) of the Gospel-scheme—that is, in plain terms, human additions to a divine Revelation—were introduced in early Ages of the Church, and have always found admission, more or less, in a great part of the Christian World. But our Reformers, whatever opinion may be formed as to what their decisions were, or ought to have been, as to some points,^y must at least be acknowledged to have kept perfectly free from the above-mentioned error: that of representing gratuitous, self-imposed suffering,—whether from hunger and thirst, or cold, or scourgings, or beds of flint, or of whatever kind,—as an acceptable Christian Service. Neither as an atonement for sin, nor as, in any way, a Christian duty, do they recommend or countenance any kind of voluntary self-inflicted

^y See Note C at the end of this Essay.

pain, simply as pain, and as on that ground approved by our heavenly Master; or as either something to be *superadded* to, or *substituted* for, the duty of habitual temperance and self-control.

§ 13. The danger however is not only so great, but likewise so palpable, of giving way to intemperance or to luxurious self-indulgence, that many are apt to disbelieve or overlook all danger on the side of Asceticism, and to consider *that* as being, at the worst, no more than a harmless error, leading to no evil beyond the unnecessary bodily suffering undergone;—as something superfluous, but nowise mischievous. But in truth *nothing is harmless that is mistaken for a virtue*. Whatever is practised and admired as a Christian duty, when it is none, is likely to be worse than useless: and to dwell ever so copiously, and eloquently, and truly, on *one* class of faults, does not go a step towards disproving the reality, or the magnitude, or the danger, of a different class of faults.

In the present instance, besides the danger above adverted to, of combining *both* faults,—of

compensating, by austerities at particular seasons, for habitual self-indulgence at other times,—there are also other evils connected with Asceticism. Experience will show to any one who carefully and candidly surveys mankind, that it has a strong tendency to generate spiritual pride, uncharitable harshness towards opponents, and a general laxity of conscience in points not immediately connected with ascetic observances. Let any one look to the latter part of the third century, and the period immediately succeeding, and to every Age and portion of the Church in which ascetic mortification has most flourished ; and he will find the general rule to be (subject, of course, like other general rules, to exceptions), that those most remarkable for excessive austerities, have been remarkable also for overbearing pride, veiled from themselves and from others by a seeming humility ;—a pride fostered by the almost idolatrous veneration—far beyond what real Christian virtues generally obtain—that is bestowed by those around them. They will be found also, generally speaking, to have been distinguished by a morose and irritable temper ; impatient of opposition, bitter and rancorous in

controversy, merciless persecutors, and often most unscrupulous in the use of pious frauds and disingenuous artifice^z in compassing their ends.

The truth seems to be, that while the practice of any truly Christian virtue tends to cherish every other Christian virtue, purifying and elevating the moral taste, and christianizing the whole character, the practice, on the contrary, of any spurious imitation of virtue is more likely to be *substituted* for general Christian morality, than to prove a help towards it; and thus, gradually to debase, instead of exalting the character. Each point wherein we are truly copying the examples of Jesus and his Apostles is an advance towards a resemblance to them, in principle and conduct, throughout; because the genuine “fruits of the Spirit” all come from the same root; and we are thus in the way to “add to our faith virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity.”^a

Every superstition, on the contrary—every-

^z See Dr. West's Discourse on Reserve.

^a 2 Pet. i. 5.

thing that is, either in practice or in principle, at variance with the character of those our great patterns,—tends, as far as it goes, to lead us away from them, and to divert religious sentiments into a wrong channel.

§ 14. Into superstition, of whatever kind, and, among others, that branch of it which consists in ascetic self-torture,—no one of candid mind is likely to be led by our Reformers ;^b who give, as I have before observed, no countenance to the notion of substituting for Gospel-morality, or superadding to it, periodical austerities, and endurance of gratuitous sufferings.

In the collect, for example, for the 1st Sunday in Lent, the virtue which they instruct us to pray that we may be enabled to practise, is, “ to

^b Accordingly, we find—and it is a remarkable fact—that the advocates of Asceticism among the (nominal) members of our Church, are accustomed, either openly, or by oblique insinuations, to disparage these men,—to deny the great Reform they effected—and to resort to the examples and precepts of what they call “ the Primitive Church ;” that is, those Ages most fruitful in DEVELOPMENTS ;—in corruptions of the Gospel-religion, and unauthorized additions to it, devised by presumptuous men.

use such abstinence that our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may *ever* obey God's motions, in righteousness and true holiness;" which must evidently be a duty not for a certain portion of each year, or week, but for every time alike. The fasting and self-denial which they direct us to practise,^c in the sense of resistance to *all* temptations and patient endurance of *every* cross that may be laid on us, and constant self-control, and subjugation of the appetites, and abstinence from *every* kind of luxurious excess, is evidently not a duty to be reserved for particular days and seasons, but to be habitually practised, and wrought into the whole character. For he who is a Christian at all, must be one *constantly*; because he is, as such, a "living stone" of the Temple of God's Spirit. "Know ye not" (says the Apostle) "that your bodies are the Temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you? Now if any one" (he adds) "defile the Temple of God, him will God destroy."

Let the Christian live therefore—not on this day or on that, but every day—as becomes those

^c See Note C, at the end of this Essay.

who believe that they are a portion of the Sanctuary, and who are preparing for the coming of Him “who shall change our vile body that it may become like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself,” and who “having this hope in them,” strive to “purify themselves, even as He is pure.”

NOTES TO ESSAY X.

NOTE A, pages 405, 411, 428.

THE following extract from the biographical panegyric of an ascetic nun, (lately published) will shew, as well as a multitude of other such records which might be cited, how nearly the Christian religion has been brought to a resemblance to that of the Hindoos, in the point of self-torture ; and one may add, almost of *self-immolation*. For though it is pretended that ascetics are advised to limit their inflictions at a point that will not endanger health, the praises bestowed on those who have not only endangered but manifestly shortened their lives,—praises bestowed expressly on that very account—plainly shew that no such limitation is really prescribed.

“ Each year she made a spiritual retreat of eight days, great part of which she spent in the Church on bended knees ; and the night of Holy Thursday was, ever, with her, one of sacred and unintermitting watching before the adorable sacrament of the altar ; yet it was only in

performing, after her death, the last rites of friendship to her remains, that *her bones were discovered to be exco-riated and ulcerated*, and to have been so for years,—yet the *acute pain* which kneeling must have caused her, she bore with silent and enduring fortitude. She never whispered to her nearest and dearest associates, a hint of her secret and long-continued suffering; it was known but to her and to God. The soles of her feet were, at the same time, found covered with tumours, such as would have prevented any other person from walking, yet for the last three years of her life she walked over great part of the city, begging from door to door for the support of those charitable institutions, which would otherwise have fallen to the ground.

“To such works was the life of Miss N—— devoted. In the year 1789, she reached the fifty-sixth year of her age. In the spring of that year, the symptoms of a *premature old age* began to develop themselves, in her exhausted frame,” &c. See also “Dr. Gilly’s *Vigilantius* and his *Times*,” ch. vi.

NOTE B, page 445.

*Extract from an Act of Parliament, in the reign of
Edward VI. A. D. 1549.*

“That although Days and Meats are in themselves alike, yet Fasting, being a great help to Virtue, and to the subduing the Body to the Mind, *and a distinction of*

meats conducing to the advancement of the Fishing-trade, be it enacted that Lent, and all Fridays and Saturdays and Ember Days, should be Fish Days." Penalties are annexed to the breaking of the Law, except in the case of weak persons and those who had *the King's licence*.

NOTE C, page 450.

What is to be regarded as the decision of our own Church on this matter, is a question on which considerable doubt, perplexity, and difference of opinion, have arisen. To enter on a full discussion of it would be foreign from the main design of this volume; which is, to elucidate the meaning, not, of any uninspired Formularies, but of some portions of *Scripture*.'

It may be worth while however to remark that Fasting cannot be reckoned an "*Ordinance*," properly so called, of our Church. There are indeed *allusions* to it in some of our services; and also certain "days of fasting and abstinence," and likewise "Feast days," are noted in the Calendar: but no *injunctions* are anywhere given to observe these days, nor any directions as to the *mode* of observance, either of a Fast or a Feast. Now it would be an incorrect use of language almost amounting to a contradiction, to speak of an *Ordinance* which ordains nothing definite;—an injunction as to a positive-duty, in which no one can say what it is that is enjoined.

When the Church directs what persons shall be Baptized,—shall be Confirmed,—shall receive the Holy

Communion, no one can doubt what it is that he is required to do; the appointed Services being set forth along with rubrical directions, in the Prayer-book. And if there had been an express command given that all members of the Church should fast on certain days, we should have expected (as is manifestly necessary in the case of any positive-ordinance) that the details should be no less distinctly specified. For “if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?”

And accordingly in those Churches which do retain Fasting among their public-ordinances, all the particulars respecting the food to be used and abstained from, and respecting the dispensations that are to be allowed, are distinctly laid down, partly by each Church itself, and partly, within certain specified limits, by each Bishop, from year to year, within his own Diocese.

In our Church on the contrary, not only are no such directions given, but those very Services just above alluded to seem to indicate that *no public positive-ordinance* was designed; but only—as in the case of almsgiving—an *exhortation* to the practice of a *moral-duty*. For though the portion of Service appointed in place of the Epistle for Ash-Wednesday has a reference to a *public Fast* among the Jews, the Gospel, on the other hand that is selected, contains our Lord’s animadversion on the ostentatious practice of the Pharisees in their *private* Fasts; which He warns his Disciples against; “that thou *appear not unto men to fast*: an admonition which would be wholly inapplicable to

any *public* Ordinance. And again, when we look at the Collect for the 1st Sunday in Lent, we find it (as I have above remarked) referring altogether to the duty of *habitual temperance*; “such abstinence, that, the flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey God’s motions in righteousness and true holiness,” being evidently a moral-duty, and one not pertaining to any particular season, but to all times.

And the very same duty and no other, is inculcated throughout the Homily on Fasting. It refers indeed to passages of Scripture in which mention is made of Fasting, more properly so called; but the practical doctrine on which it dwells throughout, is, the duty of “keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection,” by habitually refraining from any such indulgence of the appetites as may tend to cloud the intellect, to inflame the passions, or in any way to enslave the higher parts of our nature to the baser.

But neither there nor anywhere else is anything prescribed as to the quantity or quality of food to be taken, or as to any such particulars. Each individual is left by our Church to frame, and observe, for himself, according to his own responsible discretion, whatever rules as to these points he may judge most suitable to the *end* proposed;—that of making the body not the master but the servant, and (as far as lies in him) the efficient servant of the spiritual portion of our nature.

Those who, with this view, might find it most advisable to set aside certain days—not indeed as the

only times on which they should control their appetites, while they should, on others, give a loose to sensuality, but—on which they should use a more sparing diet than ordinary, and who might wish to select those particular days which they and their forefathers had been accustomed so to employ,—these I conceive were the persons for whose use the fast-days in the Calendar were marked.

But as there is no injunction for the observance of these days, so, neither are there any directions as to the *mode* in which those who do observe them are to regulate that observance.

If indeed the noting in the Calendar of certain fast days had been a *novelty* introduced by the Reformers, no such practice having existed before, then indeed it might have been inferred that they designed to establish a positive-ordinance on the subject, and had left their work unfinished, having intended to proceed to lay down such precise directions as must evidently be indispensably necessary for its observance. But as we know that the reverse of this was the fact, there seems no reason to doubt that their design in retaining the fast-days in the Calendar was what has been above suggested; and that they purposely abstained from laying down rules as for a public positive-ordinance; meaning to leave the whole matter to the private discretion of each individual Christian.

Our Reformers probably judged it unsafe to make enactments on such a subject, on account of the great difference in men's bodily constitutions. That which

would be a dangerously insufficient nourishment for one person, may be repletion, or dangerous excess, to another. The same length of abstinence, or the same kind of diet, which clears and invigorates the mind of one, may produce in another, faintness, unfitness for all action of mind or body, or inaptitude for devout meditation. And the system of *dispensations* which such diversities render necessary, makes an opening, as they doubtless well knew, for endless abuses and scandals.

They judged it best therefore to lay down, in this matter, merely the *principles* on which we ought to act,—the *end* to be aimed at;—and to leave to the discretion and conscience of each individual, the *application* of those principles, and the *means* towards that end.

THE END.

Mr. W. W. W.

ADDRESS

TO

THE CLERGY AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
ESTABLISHED CHURCH,

ON

THE USE AND ABUSE

OF

THE PRESENT OCCASION

FOR

THE EXERCISE OF BENEFICENCE.

BY

THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

Richard D. King

Δωρεὰν δότε.

Second Edition.

LONDON:

B. FELLOWES, LUDGATE STREET,
AND HODGES AND SMITH, DUBLIN.

1847.

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ADDRESS,

&c. &c.

AMIDST all the grief and alarm which occupies almost every mind, on account of the severe affliction with which it has pleased Providence to visit this country, there is something very consolatory and gratifying in the ready and hearty sympathy which has been manifested in England. In England, no less than in Ireland, there has appeared not only no reluctance, but a positive eagerness to come forward for the relief of our suffering fellow-subjects. Not only the wealthy, but even those in very narrow circumstances, have shown themselves "ready to give and glad to distribute," with most unostentatious liberality.

And this liberality continues to flow in an unchecked stream, notwithstanding all the efforts that have long been made, and, I grieve to say, are still made, to alienate from each other the English and Irish populations, to foster hostile feelings between them, and to bring about such a separation between the two countries as would leave Ireland as desti-

tute of all especial claim for relief from England as from any foreign nation. It seems to be generally understood that the great mass of the Irish nation are chargeable with nothing worse than with too easily giving themselves up to prejudice produced by misrepresentation ; and that at any rate the best course to be pursued is to persevere in endeavouring to “ overcome evil with good,” and to convince the people of this island of the benefit derived from the union of the two countries, not by arguments, but by actions ; by the liberal relief to their distress afforded by their English fellow-subjects.

National animosity, and also religious animosity between Protestants and Roman Catholics, which have so long been a principal source of disquiet and misery to Ireland, can in no way be more effectually checked than by a cordial co-operation (such as is now exhibited) of persons of all persuasions, in freely bestowing relief on the destitute, without distinction of creed or birth-place. And thus an important and lasting benefit may be derived from a temporary affliction.

Attempts, however, have been made, as was, perhaps, to be expected, to prevent these good effects, by representing all the efforts made by Protestants for the relief of their Roman Catholic brethren, as dictated by a desire of making proselytes ; and the gifts bestowed, accordingly, as of the character of bribes. Such representations you will probably have seen put forth in the public papers.

I have no doubt whatever that not one in a hundred—probably not one in a thousand—of the contributors (a large proportion of whom have consulted me as to the best mode of bestowing their donations) have been actuated by any such motives. But, unfortunately, it cannot be denied that suggestions to this effect have been put forth, by persons, well-meaning probably, but, in my view, most grievously in error. It is indeed, considering what human nature is, no more than we might expect, that out of a very great number (of whatever persuasion) some few should fall into such an error. And the result is but too likely to ensue, that a taint of suspicion will be extended to the whole Body of the contributors ; most undeservedly, I am convinced, as far as regards the great majority of them.

It is for this reason that I have thought it necessary—and I would earnestly impress this necessity on the minds of those of you whose sentiments coincide with mine—to disavow and protest against, as strongly as possible, all such designs as those above alluded to.

No one, it is true, would be justifiable in shrinking from the avowal of the religious principles which he sincerely holds, however different from his neighbour's, when suitable occasions present themselves : and to bestow, at any time, and not least when we are administering relief to bodily wants, religious consolations or exhortations on members of our own Church, or on any others, so far as their religious

persuasion agrees with our's, is what no one would deem objectionable. But there cannot be a more emphatically *unsuitable* occasion for urging any one to change his religion and adopt our's, than when we are proposing to relieve his physical distress ; because all the grace of a charitable action is, in this way, destroyed, and we present ourselves to his mind as seeking to take an ungenerous advantage of his misery, and as converting our benefactions into a bribe to induce him to do violence to his conscience.

The good Samaritan in the parable, who recognized a "*Neighbour*" in any one he was able to relieve, even in one who had been brought up to regard him as a heretic, is not represented as accompanying his careful kindness towards the wounded traveller with exhortations to prefer the worship on Mount Gerizim to that at Jerusalem.

The golden rule for guiding our judgment in any doubtful case is, to suppose oneself in another's place. Now, what would be the feelings of any one of us, if, when residing in some foreign country of a different religion from his own, he saw his children starving around him, and if he were given to understand it was expected that, in consideration of the relief offered, he should receive, himself, and allow his children to receive, such religious instruction as he had been taught to regard as erroneous ? Surely, if any one of you were so situated, and if you were driven by the extremity of distress to

make a compromise of principle, it is likely that you would feel—at least when the pressing emergency was past—that your own conduct was pardonable, and that of your converters unpardonable. It is likely you would be filled with disgust, both for them and also for the religion itself which they had thus attempted to force upon you.

If, on the contrary, relief were liberally, and kindly, and unconditionally bestowed, you would at least be induced to lay aside all bitterly hostile prejudice against your benefactors,—to reject all calumnious imputations of practical immorality as a necessary result of their doctrines,—and to admit that, however erroneous might be their theory, these men had shown themselves at least capable of Christian conduct. And to such conclusions you would be led, without any need of having them inculcated by argumentation ; simply by *actions*, which speak more strongly than words ; “by well-*doing*, which puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

Now it cannot reasonably be alleged in reply,—“ In the supposed case those seeking to convert me are in the *wrong*, while I am in the right ; and it is to truth, and not to error, that I am seeking to convert men.” For this consideration goes in reality to strengthen the argument. It is characteristic of truth to appeal to an *unbiassed* judgment. Error, of whatever kind, never can have on its side reasons *intrinsically* as strong as those on the side of truth. But all *other* inducements,—whether of force, or fear,

or bribery,—all appeals to temporal interests, all reference to physical suffering or enjoyment,—all these may be employed *equally* on behalf of truth or falsehood. A man may, it is true, be induced by such motives to adopt a creed or a course of conduct that is in itself right ; but they are motives which may serve the *wrong* cause equally well ; so that by having recourse to them, we are, as far as lies in us, putting truth and falsehood on a level. When, on the contrary, we abstain from and deprecate the calling in of any inducements to belief, except rational appeals to an unbiassed judgment, we are then doing what lies in us to give truth its fair and legitimate advantage over falsehood.

But this is not all. Even if any *be* induced, by the pressure of physical distress, or by any such influence, to pursue a course which is in itself right, still *he* is wrong in pursuing it. “ The highest truth,” as is most justly observed by the late Dr. Arnold, “ if professed by one who believes it not in his heart, is, to him, a lie, and he sins greatly by professing it. Let us try, as much as we will, to convince our neighbours ; but let us beware of influencing their conduct, when we fail of influencing their convictions. He who bribes or frightens his neighbour into doing an act which no good man would do for reward, or from fear, is tempting his neighbour to sin ; he is assisting to lower and to harden his conscience ; to make him act for the favour or from the fear of man, instead of for the favour or from the fear of

God ; and if this be a sin in him, it is a double sin in us to tempt him to it.”—*Arnold’s Christian Life*, p. 435.

And, supposing that not merely an outward profession, but a real conviction, were in any instance produced by an appeal to secular motives ; still we could not expect it to be a permanent conviction. Whenever, in any such instance, the pressure of severe present distress and alarm shall have passed away, it is likely that a man will re-consider what he has said and done, and will find that in yielding to the earnest solicitations of one who had come forward to save him from perishing, he has been proceeding on insufficient grounds. Although there may be in reality very good and valid reasons for the religion he shall have thus embraced, still, if he have embraced it, not for those reasons, but on account of the relief supplied to his necessities, it will be likely to occur to him afterwards, that no real proof is thus afforded of the truth of that religion. It is undeniable that men of very various religious persuasions, *all* of which cannot be true, do, from time to time, come forward to relieve liberally their distressed fellow-creatures ; and gratitude for such liberality cannot, it is evident, be a proper ground for the embracing of any one of those various religions.

Even supposing, therefore, that we are pleading the cause of truth, and urging strong arguments in its defence, still, if these arguments prevail for a time, not from a perception of their real force, but through

the effect of a pressure of severe temporary distress, we cannot calculate on any permanent good effect from them.

But advantage has been taken of the existing calamity to inculcate, with a view to the conversion of persons whom I believe to be in error, doctrines which I cannot but think utterly unsound and of dangerous tendency, by arguments which will not stand the test of calm and rational examination. There are some who represent the present famine (as indeed they did the cholera some years back) as a divine judgment sent for the punishment of what they designate as national sins; especially the degree of toleration and favour shown to the members of the Church of Rome. Now this procedure, the attributing to such and such causes the supposed divine wrath, is likely, when those of a different creed from our own are thus addressed, to be, by some of them, rejected as profane presumption, and, by others, *retorted*. When once men begin to take upon them the office of inspired prophets, and to pronounce boldly what are the counsels of the Most High, it is as easy to do this on the one side as on the other. Roman Catholics who are told that a pestilence or a famine are sent as judgments on the land for the toleration of Romanism, may contend that, on the contrary, it is the Protestantism that is the national sin. And without the evidence of a sensible miracle to appeal to, neither party can expect to convince the other.

When Israel was afflicted with a famine in the days of Elijah, on account of the idolatry of those of the people who had offended the Lord by worshipping Baal, the idolaters might have contended that the judgment was sent by Baal against the worshippers of Jehovah, *had not* the prophet expressly denounced that judgment *beforehand*, and foretold both the commencement, and afterwards the termination, of the drought ; besides calling down the fire from heaven upon the altar. This it is that enables us to pronounce that that famine was a divine judgment sent for the sin of Israel, and for *what* sin. And it is the same with the many similar cases that are recorded in Scripture. That Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed on account of their abominable wickedness *we know, because Scripture* tells us so. And that Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for tempting the Spirit of God we know, and all present knew, *because* the Apostle Peter announced beforehand their fate, and declared the crime which called it down. But for any uninspired man to take upon him to make similar declarations respecting any one of his neighbours who may die suddenly, or concerning any city that may be destroyed by a volcano or an earthquake, is as irrational and presumptuous as it is uncharitable and unchristian.

We ought, therefore, I think, for the reasons above laid down, not only to avoid but to protest against the course pursued and recommended by

some zealous, but, I must think, neither judicious nor fair-minded men.

But the removal of unjust prejudice against the professors of any religion, the softening of religious animosity, and a disposition to do full justice to the practical Christian virtue at least of those who differ from us,—these are, as I observed above, likely to be *permanent* good results of free and impartial beneficence ; because, to judge charitably of those who show charity, and to feel kindly towards benefactors, implies no irrational unwarranted inference, such as will not abide the test of calm reflection ; and this, consequently, we may hope will be a lasting good effect.

There are, I trust and believe, but very few persons among the readers of these pages who have any need to be themselves cautioned against such errors in procedure as those I have been adverting to. But I have put forth these observations in the hope that those who concur with me in respect of the proper use to be made of an occasion like the present, may be induced to impress on others, as strongly as possible, when opportunity offers, the sentiments by which they themselves are actuated.

THE END.

A D D R E S S

TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESES OF DUBLIN AND GLANDALAGH, AND KILDARE

ON THE

RECENT CHANGES IN THE SYSTEM

OF

IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION.

BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

Τὸ γὰρ βραχὺ τοῦτο πᾶσαν ὁμῶν ἔχει τὴν βεβαίωσιν καὶ πείραν τῆς γνώμης* οἷς εἰ ξυγχωρήσετε, καὶ ἄλλο τι μείζον ἐνθὺς ἐπιταχθήσεσθε.

THUCYD. Hist. I., c. 140.

“For this small matter contains the very thing that is to put your resolution to the test; and if you give way to these demands, a still heavier burthen will presently be laid upon you.”

LONDON:

JOHN W. PARKER AND SON, WEST STRAND.

DUBLIN:

HODGES AND SMITH, GRAFTON STREET.

M DCCC LIII.

LONDON:
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COVENT GARDEN.

ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY,

ETC.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

Although I have briefly noticed, in the Appendix to the Charge of this year, the disputes that have lately taken place relative to some books published by the Education Board, I have thought it advisable to lay before you a somewhat fuller explanation of the transactions which led to my removal from that Board.

So numerous, and so varied, and so gross are the misstatements and misconceptions that are now afloat on the subject, that I think you may fairly expect of me such explanation. But I shall deem it sufficient to lay before you, briefly, what is the true state of the case, without thinking it necessary to particularize the several falsehoods and misrepresentations that have been circulated,—for the most part anonymously,—as they will have been incidentally refuted by the true statement of facts. I will only remind you, that the resort to falsehoods may be taken as a presumption of a thoroughly weak cause, and of a consciousness of this on the part of the originators of them. Many others, however, have probably received, and helped

to propagate, misstatements, merely through rash credulity. But both have been undesignedly bestowing praise where censure was designed, and censuring those they meant to commend, when they reprobated the one party and applauded the other for doing exactly the opposite to what really was done by each respectively.

They have censured, for aiming at unwarrantable innovations, the very persons who have steadily resisted such innovations; and have commended for adhering firmly to the Established System of National Education, those who have been labouring to subvert it.

I, for my part, am far from the design to bring charges against others. I wish merely to explain the real state of things. I would not be understood to censure the consent given by others to what I cannot approve, or the opposition made by others to what I consider both expedient and just, except so far as *incidentally* is unavoidable in vindicating my own conduct.

If others consider as fair, justifiable, and right, the proceedings to which I am about to advert, I have only to express my unfeigned wonder, and my utter dissent, and my deep regret.

I should be sorry to give *unnecessary offence*, but it was indispensable for me to state my views in *joining* and in *quitting* the Board,—what view I took, and on what grounds, of proceedings which forced me to the last important step—a step, for which I should

have been deeply culpable, if not unavoidable, and called for by a sense of duty to the public.

When the Education Board was originally established, it was at first a matter of doubt whether anything more could be accomplished than simply to provide a joint education, purely secular, leaving all instruction in any way connected with religion to the care of the pastors of the several Denominations. And it was judged that even teaching the children of the poor to read and write, only securing them from seditious and positively immoral books, would be a great advance beyond the existing hedge-schools, in which the few children who did obtain the first rudiments of learning, received them, too often, blended with much that was absolutely corrupting.

But some of the Commissioners suggested, and the suggestion was adopted by the rest, and sanctioned by Government, that it would be possible to introduce into the united education, such portions of sacred history and of christian instruction as might involve no matter of controversy among Christians. *Complete* religious instruction, indeed, it was plain, *could not* be imparted in common to those of different persuasions. But it was suggested that, as there are some points on which all Christians are agreed, it would be desirable that in these the children should be instructed together, leaving a fuller religious instruction to be supplied to them separately, in conformity with the will of their parents.

Accordingly, a brief summary of Sacred History

was introduced into the 'READING BOOKS' provided by the Board. And, in addition to this, the *Scripture Lessons*, comprising a large portion both of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, were drawn up. It was thought best that the portions of Scripture selected (containing the chief part of the early historical books of the Old Testament, the Gospel of Luke, and the Book of Acts) should not be taken exclusively either from the Authorized Version of our Church, or from the Douay Version, but partly from each, where the one or the other seemed preferable; and partly varying from both where a new translation was called for. And to each Lesson were appended Questions which the Teacher was to ask the Children, and to which he was to confine himself. This we considered as highly important; because, on the one hand, if children are not examined at all as to the sense of what they have been reading, the words will often fail to make any impression on the understanding; and, on the other hand, it would evidently be very rash to leave the questioning of the learners entirely to the discretion of an ordinary schoolmaster or mistress; who might often, without any ill design, ask very ill-judged and improper questions.

That the *Scripture Lessons* are the most correct translation extant in our language, I have always found acknowledged by every competent scholar who was exempt from prejudice. And I was the more confirmed in this conviction by the objections urged against the translation by some persons of undoubted

learning, but whose unfavourable bias was but too manifest. For those objections were so palpably frivolous, that it was perfectly wonderful how any man of sense could seriously bring them forward. But they were the only ones that could be found.

I am speaking now of such persons as had read, or, at least, looked into, the books in question. Among the greater number who had not, many very grave objections were afloat, resting entirely on fabrications, which were swallowed with implicit credulity by persons who would not take the trouble (small as it would have been) of ascertaining what was the fact.

To take one instance out of many: it was publicly announced, and that repeatedly, in crowded assemblies, that a dispute had existed among the Commissioners, whether 'repent' or 'do penance' should be the rendering in a passage in the early part of Luke's Gospel; and that the result had been, the total omission of the whole passage. And this statement was received, day after day, with shouts of indignation, by hundreds of auditors, no one of whom ever thought of looking into the book itself, (which was to be bought for sixpence,) where they would have seen the passage translated just as it is in our own authorized version.

And I could give many other instances of the same unenquiring credulity, in reference both to these books, and to many other matters concerning the National Education System.

Subsequently, however, these *.Scripture Lessons*

were so far approved by many of those who had originally denounced them as corrupt and mischievous, that they recommended that the use of them should be made indispensable. This, however, I, in common with the other Commissioners, always resisted. We did not think it right to enforce on any patron of a school the use of any book he might not approve. And with respect to these *Scripture Lessons*, and also to a book of *Sacred Poetry*, and *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, we did not allow any child, whose parents had a conscientious objection, to be compelled to attend the reading of them.

To all the three books just mentioned the sanction of the Board was given, they being drawn up with a careful avoidance of matters of controversy among Christians, and adapted to the capacity of children.

You are doubtless aware that all the books, either published or in any way sanctioned by the Board, had, and were always required to have, the *unanimous* approval of *all* the Commissioners. Copies of each were sent round to each individual Commissioner, and nothing was admitted that was objected to even by any *one* of them.

As for the books employed in the separate religious instruction of the children of different communions, with these, of course, the Board itself can have nothing to do; though they were subjected, to a certain extent, to the control of those Commissioners respectively who were members of each communion.

For this separate instruction no books—besides

the authorized Formularies of each church—were to be used without the consent of those Commissioners who belonged to that church. Between the books published by the Board itself, and others that are sanctioned by it, there is this, and only this, distinction—that the latter are merely *allowed* to be used by those who may prefer them, as being in the Commissioners' opinion unexceptionable, and suitable for united education; while the former are *recommended* as the *most* suitable. But the unanimous approval of the Board has always been required for both.

It was not deemed right to make the use of any book imperative. Each Manager of a school was allowed to use, and to obtain gratis, or at half-price, whatever books (sanctioned by the Board) he approved, and to omit the use of any of them he might not wish for.

In the central Model-school in Dublin, and in all the Model-schools, the Board itself being the Patron, *all* the Books published by the Board were, of course, used. For this was implied in the rule just above mentioned, that *every* Patron was to use as many of these books as he *approved*; and the Commissioners, of course, were understood to approve the books they themselves had published and recommended.

The system thus established has been going on for above twenty years, both in the Model-schools and in a considerable number of schools under Private Patrons. It was said, indeed, at first, and from time

to time, ever since, down to the present day, that the attempt to give any portion of religious instruction to Protestants or Roman-catholics jointly, must end in a total failure; that it is a thing quite impossible; that it was "one of the wildest schemes" (this is reported to have been said in Parliament during the present Session) "that ever entered into the mind of man;" that a "plan of united education must fail, and had notoriously failed," &c. And certainly there were not wanting most strenuous endeavours to prevent success. But notwithstanding all predictions, and all assertions, and all efforts, the impossibility was surmounted—the "wild scheme" was successfully realized—the system, whose failure was inevitable, was actually working; and though the opponents were unconvinced by facts, children were educated. And the system might have continued to exist now, and to make progress in its most beneficial form, had it been supported by a larger number of persons, such as would have firmly resisted any encroachments attempted by an ultra-montane party. As it was, the plan, though, in a majority of instances, rendered partially abortive through the efforts made to render it so, was completely successful in, I believe, *every* instance (and there were many hundred such) in which it was allowed a full and fair trial. In the central Model-school, in which there are usually about 1100 children (of whom about 80 per cent. are Roman-catholics)—children of all denominations received together such instruction as I have been describing. And it was

the same with the other Model-schools, and with hundreds of schools under Private Patrons, in which thousands of persons have been educated, and many of whom have since married, and had children, who are now attending the very schools in which their parents had been taught. These schools were as obstinate as those Planets which Galileo was compelled to acknowledge—"did not, and could not, possibly move;" and "yet"—as he whispered to a friend—"they do move."

The idea of having steam-carriages that should travel at the rate of as much as twelve miles an hour, was derided, when first suggested, as one of the wildest schemes that ever entered the mind of man. This is not, however, maintained still, now that we see them in motion every day. But, in the other case, political and theological party-feelings gave a stronger bias to men's minds.

I, for my part, can never repent having contributed to confer even an imperfect, but still an important benefit, on many thousands of my countrymen—even though, for inscrutable reasons, it should be decreed that the next generation is to be thrown back into darkness.

Unfortunately, in some of the lately-established District Model-schools, without any meeting of the Board, summoned specially to discuss and decide so important a matter,—without even the knowledge of many of the Commissioners,—some officers of the Board took upon them (at the first opening of these

schools) to exclude altogether some of the books published and recommended by the Board.* And to this manifestly irregular procedure may be traced, chiefly, if not entirely, the present deplorable state of things.

As soon as I discovered—which was in the autumn of last year—what an unwarrantable step had been taken, I applied to the Board for the redress of so manifest and gross a usurpation of our authority. But, unhappily, so great an encouragement had been afforded by the very occurrence of the irregularity, to the party secretly or openly adverse to the existing system, that, after so many delays and excuses, there seemed to be a disposition in the majority of the Commissioners, instead of rectifying the manifest wrong that had been done, rather to confirm and ratify it, and to follow it up by still further encroachments on the system.† And a suspicion was thus—not unreasonably—generated, that over and above any innovations that might be introduced by the Commissioners themselves, direct, other innovations also might, to an indefinite extent, be introduced *without* any authority from them, and might afterwards, instead of being checked, receive their sanction.

Resolutions were proposed, and some of them carried, of a character palpably at variance with the system hitherto in operation; as, for instance, that in

* See Appendix.

† See Appendix.

each District Model-school it should be a question to be decided by the Board which of the Books sanctioned by the Board should be used or excluded; (and yet each was to be called a MODEL-school!) that every teacher should use or refuse to use these books, according to his own choice, and in either case should still retain his situation; (which is as if every officer in the army should be allowed to refuse serving in a place he objected to, yet to insist on *retaining his commission*;) that one of the rules should be interpreted in a sense which the words will bear, but which is utterly at variance, not only with reason and with the known intention of the framers, but also with the sense in which it had always been explained, and always acted on;* and that thus the objection of any one child to a certain book should debar all the rest from the use of it;† and finally, it was proposed to *prohibit altogether* three of the books published by the

* See Appendix, Correspondence with Mr. Tottenham.

† The words “separate religious instruction,” in the 8th Rule, may be understood (taking the words by themselves) either of the “separate instruction of *different persuasions*,” or of “instruction separate from that secular instruction which *all* children are *obliged* to attend.” This latter—which is the interpretation that had always been acted on—is indisputably the one designed; because the rule relates to books sanctioned by the whole Board, which never had, or could have, anything to do with books to be used in the separate instruction of children of the several religious persuasions. And the framers of the rule never had their minds crossed by the thought of anything so absurd as the exclusion of a number of children from the reading of what their parents approved by the objection of others.

Board, the *Scripture-Lessons*, the *Sacred Poetry* and the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*.

Subsequently, this prohibition was for the present limited to one of the books, and the one fixed on was the last of the three.* It was probably thought—and not erroneously—that, when once the *principle* was established, that the Commissioners might fairly and equitably prohibit any books sanctioned by them, no one could wonder or complain at its being afterwards applied to an indefinite extent. And perhaps it was thought that some people, in England at least, would be so simple as to think that the exclusion of *one* book could be no very formidable change; that this would satisfy all parties, and that nothing further would be attempted.†

I, however, (besides that I knew that much more was actually designed,) perceived—as I think any man of common sense must—that there could no longer be

* The reason for this selection we can only conjecture; certainly it could not have been the one which some have assigned, its being “an essentially Protestant book.” For though drawn up by Protestants—Dr. Carlile, the late Bishop Dickinson, and myself—it is, as far as regards the present question, not at all less the work of Archbishop Murray than ours. For he, as well as the rest of the Commissioners, deliberately recommended it. He perused it with scrupulous care; and he sent over a copy to the late Pope, who had it read to him in Italian, and found it unexceptionable. The other edition of the book—that not published but merely sanctioned by the Board—was translated into Italian by a Roman-catholic priest at Florence, during the present Pope’s reign.

† See Motto.

any *security* against any amount of innovations; that those who had broken faith with the public could never enjoy or deserve any further public confidence; and that I could not, consistently with principles of honour, consent to be a party to proceedings which amounted to an abandonment of all fixed principles, and to a consequent subversion of the existing system, and a misapplication of a parliamentary grant.

All those—so-called modifications—of the system, amounting, in my view, to a virtual abandonment of it, which were formerly called for by some Protestants, I always resisted, though perfectly aware of the obloquy I should incur by so doing. But I acted as I did, not from a desire to gain the favour of this or that party, but on principle,* and to that principle I shall ever adhere, though well knowing that even-handed justice is a virtue, for which it is, for a time, more difficult to obtain pardon, than for most faults. He who opposes the unreasonable demands of *both* parties, must expect to incur censure from each alternately.

I was therefore compelled to consider myself dismissed, the office I had held being virtually abolished.

* A writer in some periodical which I saw lately, brings forward the vehement and successful efforts of the most bigoted Roman-catholics against the system, as a proof that it had been originally framed so as to give—and on purpose to give—an undue predominance to Roman-catholics! One would think that any one answering to the usual definition of man, as a “rational animal,” would have drawn the opposite conclusion.

But is there no conceivable case, it may be asked, which would justify the Commissioners in expunging from their list any book once sanctioned by them? Certainly, I can imagine such a case. If it had so happened (which is next to a moral impossibility) that the Commissioners had published some book of *Science* or *History*, which was afterwards found to contain much that was erroneous, and much that was obscure, they would be authorized to withdraw it, and to *substitute another* that should better fulfil the design of the former one. For instance, I have seen a book of geography, designed for the use of schools, in which the writer speaks of the Province of Ulster as the only portion of Ireland in which the English language is in common use. A book that should abound in such errors, or that should teach some exploded doctrines of Astronomy, for instance, or Chemistry, or any other science, ought certainly to be suppressed, and *superseded by a correct one on the same subject*. But this is manifestly quite a different thing from excluding altogether one *whole branch of study*, on which books had been carefully provided and unanimously recommended by the Commissioners.

But some Roman-catholics (it has been urged) have a conscientious objection to certain books. This is a sufficient reason why these persons should not be compelled to use them; nor is any so compelled, nor had I ever such a wish: but this is no reason why the use of them should be prohibited to others who do *not* feel the objection. And that there *are* such

others, is implied by the very prohibition; which would be quite *superfluous* if the objection were universal.

But you should remember that this objection is nothing *new*, and therefore cannot, with any fairness, be brought forward to justify any new procedure.

There were (besides many Protestants) Roman-catholics of as high dignity as Archbishop Murray, who decried the books in question from the very first. What, in such a case, was Government to do? To conform to all the various opinions of the different members of the same Church would have been impossible. To have allowed the most unreasonable and intolerant to dictate to the rest, would have been as unwise as unmanly. The then Government, therefore, selected persons who might be considered fair representatives of each communion, and left them to frame a system of education that should be *offered* to all, but *forced* on none.

By the "complete control over the books" to be used that was given to the Commissioners, every one always understood that no books were to be used (in united education) that were *not* sanctioned by them; but certainly not that the books they did sanction were liable at any time to be withdrawn and prohibited. It is vain to urge that the Commissioners, when first appointed, were not bound to sanction such and such particular books. The question that came before Parliament, when each successive grant was moved for, was, not what the system *might* con-

ceivably have been, but what it actually was. This is plainly proved by all the debates—and they have been numerous—that have ever taken place on the subject.

In the debate, lately, on a motion of Lord Clancarty, and in every debate on the motion for a grant for the schools, and on many other occasions, reference has been made (both by advocates and opponents) to the *list of books* sanctioned by the Board. Never did any opponent come forward to say, “This is all delusion: we are wasting time in discussing the merits of these books, since some of them may probably be struck off the list next week, and some more the week after. The list of books is merely a *bait* to allure the over-trustful into placing schools under the Board; and as soon as the deception has succeeded, the books which had chiefly aided in it will be prohibited.”

A man of honour, I need not, I trust, explain to you, considers himself bound to fulfil the expectations which he has knowingly and designedly raised and kept up, no less than if he were compelled under legal penalties. And an understood promise there certainly was, that the books sanctioned by the Board would be permanently permitted to be used; else, it is manifest, all the invitations given—and often accepted—to patrons to place schools under the Board, on that understanding, would have been a mere deception: and all the appeals to the books as characterizing the system, by every successive ministry

(including the present), and by the members of every successive parliament, in the debates on the subject, including some in this very session—all this would have been utterly nugatory and absurd.

The books, therefore, published as sanctioned by the Board, were always, it is evident, considered both by advocates and opponents as a part of the system.

That system no one was compelled to favour and support. If, however, any one on being offered the appointment of Commissioner, found that any of the books, or of the other parts of the system, were what he could not approve, he had only to decline the appointment; or at least to announce to Government *at once* that he could not accept it except on condition of such and such alterations.

No one was obliged to be a Commissioner. We all accepted the office with our eyes open; and I must ever maintain that we were appointed for the purpose of carrying on the existing system, and not of subverting it.

I was convinced, therefore, that to make myself at all a party to such proceedings, would be to forfeit all hope of public confidence, and all just claim to it. And I was obliged, therefore, to decline remaining a Commissioner even for a time, and waiting till Ministers should have had time to deliberate, and come to a final *decision*, because, during the interval, the evil was in actual operation; faith with the public was violated, and a parliamentary grant misapplied.

It is not unlikely that I shall be represented by

some persons of each of the two most opposite parties as having changed my mind respecting the system of the National Schools,—as no longer approving it, and as having thereupon abandoned it. This is not only untrue, but is the very reverse of the truth. I not only approve the system as decidedly as ever, and am as ready as ever to carry it on, but it is precisely *because* I will *not* be a party to its subversion that I have ceased to be a Commissioner. But there is nothing so notoriously false or absurd that may not gain credence if maintained, in common, by persons the most adverse to each other.

And both parties will, perhaps, rejoice at the overthrow—for the present at least—of a system which has flourished for so many years, in spite of such powerful opposition. Which of the two has the better *cause* for rejoicing,—which will have (according to the French proverb) “the last laugh,”*—remains to be proved.

The grounds on which I have acted I have thought it right, my reverend brethren, to lay before you. And I have subjoined, in an Appendix, such documents as may be needed for further explanation.

But I declined going over to England (as some had suggested) and volunteering a vindication of myself in Parliament, where no charges had been brought against me. If any other member of either House thinks that faith has been broken with Par-

* Rit bien qui rit le dernier.

liament, and with the country, he can most suitably bring the matter forward for discussion. And if, on the contrary, no one of them is of this opinion, my coming forward might naturally be imputed to factious motives, or to feelings of personal resentment.

It is my earnest wish and prayer that the final decision of the Ministry, and of the Legislature, may be in accordance with the principles of honour, and such as will conduce to the permanent benefit of the nation. Should such be the event, I shall rejoice, not for my own sake, but for my country's. And should the result be unhappily the reverse, it is for my country, and not for myself, I should grieve. But it will, at any rate, be a consolation to me to reflect that I shall have had no share in bringing about such a result. The few remaining years which, at the very utmost, are all that I can expect in this world, will not have been embittered by self-reproach, for having at the last sacrificed the principles I have acted on all my life to views of temporary and falsely-called expediency.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

Copy of Letter from N. L. Tottenham, Esq., relative to the right of Patrons of National Schools to enforce the reading of the Scripture Extracts and Book of Sacred Poetry.

Glenfarn Hall, Enniskillen, 27th August, 1840.

GENTLEMEN,—

In the two National Schools of Loughries and Kiltyclogher, established on my estate, the Roman-catholic priest has desired the teachers not to allow your *Scripture Extracts* or *Sacred Poetry* to be read. This has not met my approval, as I wish to insist on both being read. I wish, therefore, to know from you how I am to act, as I would wish to enforce the reading of both, and to exclude any children from the School who will not read the books authorized by your Board, as you are as well aware as me that a mere secular education, without attending to the moral one also, is worse than none at all. Requesting your answer,

I have the honour to remain,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) N. L. TOTTENHAM.

To the Secretary, Board of Education.

Copy of Reply from the Secretaries to the Board of National Education, to the foregoing Letter from Mr. Tottenham.

Education Office, 7th September, 1840.

SIR,—

We have laid before the Commissioners of Education your letter of the 27th ultimo, respecting the use of the *Scripture Extracts* and *Sacred Poetry* in the National Schools on your estate.

In reply, we are directed to state, that the Commissioners do not insist on having the *Scripture Extracts* or *Sacred Poetry* read by any children whose parents or guardians object to them; nor can they sanction any compulsion for the purpose. But the patrons of any School, who think proper, may have them read on the opening, or immediately before the closing of the School, provided no children shall be required then to attend against the will of their parents or guardians.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servants,

(Signed)

M. CROSS,

H. DOWDALL,

Joint Secretaries.

N. L. Tottenham, Esq., Glenfarn Hall, Enniskillen.

(B.)]

MEMORANDUM, No. 1.

1st July, 1852.

Visited Clonmel Model-school. * * * * * I find that *all* the books published by the Board are not used—the *Scripture Extracts* and the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity* being excluded. It appears to me *most important* that, in *all* the Schools of which *we* are the Patrons—viz., the Model-schools, *all* our books should be read. The inference naturally to be drawn from this not being done is, either that we are *insincere* in *recommending* books which we prove, by our conduct, we do *not* think well of, or else that we suffer this or that person to usurp our power and dictate to us. I have no doubt we shall hear of this, and very unpleasantly. *We* never *compel* any Patron to use a book he does not like, or to abstain from the use of any, sanctioned by us, which he does like; and we should exercise the same right where *we* are Patrons.

(Signed)

RD. DUBLIN.

MEMORANDUM, No. 2.

As the Archbishop will be prevented attending the next Board, he has thought it best to send a Memorandum of all he would have to say as to the question of books to be used at the Model-schools.

Memorandum.

It occurred to me, that, if questioned, as we are likely to be before long, as to the books used in the Model-schools, we should not be able to give satisfactory answers on some points.

No one has ever shown himself more ready than I have to be brave *undeserved* censure. But I doubt whether, in this case, we could show that it *is* undeserved.

I would premise,—in order to avoid being led into irrelevant discussions as to the merits of this or that particular book, —that the objection I am looking to, is to the omission of *any* of our books at *any* Model-school. If, therefore, there should be some Model-school which uses the books omitted at Clonmel, but omits *some others*, the objection would be the same.

We may be asked whether we are *insincere* in *recommending* certain of our books which we ourselves exclude from schools of which we are the Patrons?

Or, whether we suffer persons to *assume authority* over us to which they have no right?

And, moreover, we may be asked to show the *Minutes* of the *Board* at which it was resolved to exclude certain books. And we may be asked whether we deemed the question quite *unimportant*; since it was never submitted to the *Board* at all? And why, on the contrary, it was not discussed at a *special* and *full* meeting?

[My own impression is, that those who settled this matter, —in the way, doubtless, which they fully believed to be best, —quite *overlooked* the circumstance that there were important questions involved, and looked on the matter as quite one of detail; just as if it had been any ordinary school.]

(1.) If we should allege that the employment of all our books in our Model-schools might raise a suspicion that the same rule might be extended to *all* schools under the Board, the answer might be:

Such a suspicion, if ever it did arise (which is most improbable), might easily be shown to be utterly groundless and unreasonable, the two cases being not only unlike, but perfectly *contrasted*. For, it is well known that there are hundreds of schools connected with the Board, whose patrons, for various reasons, dislike certain of our books; and yet (without any inconsistency) they place their schools under it, precisely *BECAUSE* they are left a free choice, and because among the other books—those which they *do* approve—they find enough to meet their wants.

Now it would be monstrous to turn round on these persons, and say, “You shall be deprived of the liberty hitherto enjoyed, because *we* choose to enjoy the like! Because *we* use such books as we *approve*, in the schools of which we are patrons, *therefore* you shall be compelled to use what you do *not* approve!”

(2.) If we should observe that some Patrons abstain from introducing into their schools books which they do themselves approve, because these schools are situated in places where all the inhabitants are under the control of some persons,—a squire, or a priest, &c.,—who have set them against certain books, and because it would be vain to appoint, for instance, a certain hour for the reading of the *Scripture Extracts* by all who *did not object*, when it was known that *all would object*.

Answer.—The Model-schools were purposely fixed in localities where there was a prospect of exhibiting a specimen of united education.

(3.) If we should say that a *majority* of the parents, at Clonmel for instance, disapprove of such and such books.

Answer.—A good reason why *their* children should not be compelled to use them; but none, why they should act the dog in the manger, and seek to *preclude* others whose parents

might be even desirous of having these books read by their children. For by that rule they might seek to prevent others from doing anything at all which they did not choose to do themselves.

We might perhaps be asked, under this head, whether all those who object to these books have had it *explained* to them that they are books deliberately sanctioned and recommended by the *unanimous* voice of *high authorities* in *all* the *several religious communions*?

If we could answer in the affirmative, and show that they nevertheless do not approve these books, the reply would be, "Then let them enjoy their own liberty, only let them not deprive others of theirs."

(4.) "But some of the *Teachers* may perhaps dislike these books."

Answer.—Are the Teachers your servants? or, are you theirs?

If they are to have a *veto* on the books to be used, (and by parity of reasoning, on every part of the system,) you are, in fact, making *them* the Commissioners. And how can you presume to delegate to persons not at all *responsible* except to *yourselves*, a most important office, entrusted to *you*, and for which you are responsible to the Lord Lieutenant.

If you are Commissioners in reality, and not merely in name, it is for you to determine what course shall be pursued in the schools of which you are the patrons, and to find fit persons to carry out your plans, and dismiss any who may be unable or unwilling to do so.

Every other patron of a National School does so. He does not first appoint teachers, and then suffer them to dictate to him how the school shall be conducted; but he lays down the plan (conformable to the requisitions of the Board) which he thinks best, and then appoints teachers to execute his directions; even as a farmer does not allow his labourers to prescribe to him what fields shall be ploughed, and what crops cultivated, but hires men to do the work which he has marked out for them.

I don't recollect having heard of anything else that could be urged in opposition to my views. And I would wish it to be considered calmly, whether the objections, which I have stated as fairly as possible, are such as would be likely to be thought satisfactory by those who may have to examine us.

MEMORANDUM, No. 3.

Relative to the Reports of the Inspectors respecting the Books excluded from certain Model-schools.

How far the objections alleged to be felt by many parents to the reading of certain books may have been produced or fostered by any of the Inspectors themselves must be matter of conjecture. But this, at least, is certain; that such objections only show that the reading of those books should not be made *imperative* on *all* the children. It would be most unjust for any one to require that because *he* does wish his own children to read this or that book, therefore, his neighbour's children should not be allowed to read it when the parents do approve of it.

I have no doubt that, to make such a CONCESSION as this, would lead to objections being raised to some of our *Reading-books*; and if we were to alter or withdraw *these*, fresh objections would be started against *others*; and so on, till we had quite spoilt books which have been so justly valued wherever the English language is spoken, and so widely circulated. And, after all, we should probably have fresh and fresh encroachments attempted, and double complaints made, if we did not give way to them.

The simple, straightforward, consistent, and firm course, is the one which saves trouble in the long run.

I observe that the "Priest of the Parish" is often spoken of, or alluded to, as issuing orders to the Schoolmasters, negotiating with the Inspectors, &c.

All our Masters and Inspectors should be reminded, when there is occasion, that no clergyman of any denomination is

recognised by the Board as *authorized to give directions* as to what any child shall read, &c. It is only the *parents or guardians* that can be so recognised. And the Minister may say (and so, indeed, may any one else) to those parents who place themselves under his guidance, whatever he sees fit; but must not claim any direct control over the Schools.

R. D.

MEMORANDUM, No. 4.

11th November, 1852.

As a Special Board has been summoned, and a full attendance is expected, I think it right to apprise the Commissioners that my absence is to be attributed not to neglect, but to feelings of delicacy.

The Memorandum which I sent in last summer may be regarded as something of the nature of a *complaint*. Not that I attributed any culpable negligence to the Board, or any intentional misconduct to any one. But I alleged that something had gone wrong, and required to be remedied. Now, it is against all reason, that a complainant should be one of the judges; that a prosecutor should sit on the jury.

I pointed out that a decision had been made on a most important matter, and a course adopted in conformity therewith (doubtless with good intentions) *in behalf of, and under the authority of, the Board*, and for which the Board will, of course, be *held responsible*, though the matter was never distinctly and formally brought before the Board at all.

The decision made was, in my judgment, most unwise; but, at any rate, the question ought to have been determined, on mature deliberation, by a Special Board, fully attended, and summoned for the purpose.

My attendance in person would be quite superfluous now. The Commissioners have before them my opinion, and my reasons for it, and my answers to what has been urged against it. I have said all that I have to say on the subject. And I therefore leave the question to the decision of the other Commissioners.

R. D.

MEMORANDUM, No. 5.

A copy of the Minute of the Board, of the 3rd instant, has been forwarded to me.

It would be unreasonable to expect that every decision of the Commissioners should be exactly what I should most *approve*. But it is not too much to require, that every decision should be expressed clearly and without *ambiguity*. And, I most solemnly declare, that I am quite unable to feel any confidence as to the meaning of the above Minute: which therefore, I earnestly entreat the Commissioners, so far to modify as to leave no doubt as to its meaning; doubts being likely to lead to perplexity, alarm, and dissatisfaction.

The passage of the Rules referred to (paragraph 8, § 2, which says, that the Commissioners “do not insist on such and such books being used in any National School”) evidently has reference to schools *under private Patrons*. It decides that the *Patron* shall not be *required* to use in his school any book that he may not approve of. But neither that, nor any other rule, *precludes* the Patron from using in his school any book (not objected to by the Commissioners) which he *does* approve of.

Now since every Patron is, and always has been, left to decide (subject to the above restriction) what books shall and shall not be used in his school, and since, accordingly, any book which *does not appear* in the *list* he adopts is *excluded* from his school, (during the general school-hours,) it seems naturally to follow, that if the words “do not insist,” &c., be applied by the Commissioners to schools of which **THEY** are the *Patrons*, the meaning of this must be, that the books in question are to be **EXCLUDED** from **ALL** the *Model-schools*; as they *now are* from that at Clonmel.

Any book which the *Patron of the school* does not “insist” on employing in it, he “insists” on *excluding* from it; unless, indeed, it is to be understood that the master, or the children, or the inspectors, are to be left to their own choice in such a matter, and are to adopt a book, or reject it, or reintroduce it, at their own pleasure, without reference to the Patron.

Whatever it is that is really meant by the above Minute, I trust the Commissioners will see the importance of letting that meaning be fully understood.

(Signed)

RICHARD DUBLIN.

MEMORANDUM, No. 6.

Palace, 21st December, 1852.

I had not designed to trouble the Commissioners with anything further relative to the Model-schools before their decision of the questions concerning them.

But on looking over the Report and Appendix a fresh difficulty has struck me. There is no mention of the exclusion of certain of the Board-books from some of those schools. Now, let the Report and Appendix be put into the hands of any one not previously acquainted with all the details of our proceedings, and let him read all that is said about the books and about the Model-schools, and then ask him whether he does not infer, as a matter of course, that a similar course of instruction is pursued in all,—that in all the schools of which the Board is Patron, all the books published by the Board are used by some at least of the children; and whether it is not a surprise to him to find that out of eleven Model-schools five use books which are excluded from the other six.

Suppose him to *approve* of the course actually taken, as allowable, and wise, and beneficial, still I cannot doubt that he would wonder why that course was not announced to the public, and some reasons for it assigned, or at least a statement that some reasons did exist; instead of the reader's being left—and indeed led—to infer an opposite state of things from what really exists.

Considering the strong opposition to the Board which has always existed, it is doubly important that no room should be left for even any plausible insinuation that the Commissioners are withholding from the public the knowledge of any part of their proceedings, or wishing to leave an erroneous impression on men's minds.

(Signed)

RD. DUBLIN.

MEMORANDUM, No. 7.

Having been summoned to a special meeting, for the purpose of deliberating as to the books to be used in one of the schools of which the Board is Patron, and feeling it to be my duty to *absent myself* from that meeting, I feel also bound to lay before the other Commissioners my reason.

It is, that I know not, nor can conceive, any possible *grounds* on which we can deliberate and decide on such a question, except such as (in my judgment) *we ought not to recognise* or consider at all. I have been told that we are to consult the *Inspector*, and direct him to consult the *neighbouring clergy and people*, and learn whether the majority of them approve of such and such books, or not; and that we are to be guided in our decision by theirs. And indeed, if we are to debate the question at all, I cannot conceive that we can possibly have any other grounds for our deliberation. But I conceive that in thus proceeding, we shall be *handing over to others*, who ought to have *no voice* in the matter, a most important trust which has been committed *to us*. The parents of the children likely to attend the school ought to have no control, except as to their *own* respective children. And the teachers, inspectors, and other servants of the Board ought to be made to understand that *they* are to follow *our* directions, not we theirs.

I might add, that it would not be difficult for an inspector, in conjunction with a few influential persons in the neighbourhood, whom he might wish to stand well with, to *get up* an opposition to some of the Board's books.

But waiving this, and supposing the proposed investigation to be fairly conducted, I cannot think that we should be justified in thus putting such a question to a *popular vote*.

I have been told, indeed, that after this investigation shall have been made, the *ultimate decision* will still rest with the Board. But all that this amounts to must be, I conceive, that if we doubt whether the *votes have been fairly computed*,

we may order a fresh scrutiny; and we may decide *how large* the *majority* must be that is to influence us.

But the decision, after all, will have been, virtually, left to those who, I must think, have no right to make *any*.

I understand that if it shall appear that there is in any district a large majority of Roman-catholics, the *Scripture Lessons* are to be excluded from the school of that district—that is, if most of the people are of the same religious communion with Archbishop Murray, who, along with the other Commissioners, *deliberately sanctioned* these books for *united education*. And the same with seven-eighths of the pupils in the Marlborough-street School, who have always used these books—in that case we are to decide that their wish, and their right, is to debar from the use of those books, not only their own children, but those of their neighbours!

I am well aware that Archbishop M'Hale and several others objected to several of our books, but I never felt myself authorized to enter into any of the controversies that might arise in another religious communion. All I had to look to was, not which party judged the more wisely, but that Archbishop M'Hale was *not a Commissioner*, and that *Archbishop Murray was*. The system originally established—be it the best or the second best—is that which has been defended in Parliament by successive Ministers, and to which *Parliamentary grants* have been made, and which men of *various persuasions* have been even *invited to support*; and I do not, therefore, feel myself at liberty to depart from it. If it were such as I could not conscientiously maintain, I should feel bound to resign my commissionership.

I am myself convinced that the concession of any principle will not even have the effect of conciliation; it is more likely to lead to fresh and fresh encroachments, and to increased resentment at any refusal of compliance.

But be this as it may, I do not feel authorized, at least without the express sanction of Government, to depart at all from the system originally adopted, and so long carried on.

In any case where a question comes before the Board, on

which it is proper for us to deliberate and decide, I shall always be ready to discuss the matter fully, and to acquiesce in the decision of the majority. But when, as in the present case, there is a question which admits of no deliberation, except on grounds which I cannot but consider as quite inadmissible, I feel bound to absent myself, and to protest against the proceeding altogether.

I wish it to be understood, therefore, that in *every* case of a school of which the Board is Patron, my vote is to be considered as given in favour of the introduction of *all* the books published by the Board; and that I solemnly and earnestly protest against consulting an inspector on the subject, or sending round to collect the votes of the neighbours, and conforming to their advice, or request, or orders. But if the majority of the Commissioners should be of opinion that this latter course is allowable and advisable, I would entreat them at least to forbear acting on that decision till the arrival of the Lord Lieutenant. When a step is proposed to be taken which appears to the oldest of the Commissioners to be an *unwarranted transfer* to others of a trust reposed in *us*, it is surely not unreasonable to ask that at least the matter should be submitted to his Excellency.

(C.)

*Extract from Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of
National Education, 17th June, 1853.*

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:—The Right Rev. Dr. Denvir
Very Rev. Dean Meyler; Rev. Dr. Henry, President, Queen's
College, Belfast; Right Hon. M. Brady, Lord Chancellor;
Right Hon. Francis Blackburne; Sir T. N. Redington,
K.C.B.; J. J. Murphy, E.C.; James O'Ferrall, Esq.; James
Gibson, Esq.; Robert Andrews, Esq.; The Right Hon.
Alexander Macdonnell, Resident Commissioner.

The secretary reads a letter (3754) addressed by the Lord Lieutenant to the Resident Commissioner, dated 13th May, intimating the wish of his Excellency to be made acquainted with the decision of the Board on the resolution proposed by Baron Greene.

The secretary reads a letter dated 11th June (4552) from Baron Greene, stating that he cannot attend the meeting of the Board; but that after mature consideration of the amendments proposed to the resolution submitted by him, he cannot concur in either of them; and that he continues of opinion that the Minute suggested by him would be a proper one.

The secretary also reads a letter (4656) from the Marquis of Kildare, dated 15th June, in which he states, "I approve of Baron Greene's resolution, and will also consent to adopt Master Murphy's first amendment, if it is thought necessary by the majority of the Commissioners."

The secretary then reads Baron Greene's resolution, and the amendments proposed by Master Murphy, as follow:—

Baron Greene's Resolution.

The Commissioners do not insist on the *Scripture Extracts*, *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, or *Book of Sacred Poetry*, being read in any of the National schools; nor do they allow them to be read as part of the ordinary school business—during which all children, of whatever denomination they may be, are required to attend. In any school attended by children whose parents or guardians object to their being so read by their children, in such case the Commissioners prohibit the use of these books, except at times set apart for the purpose, either before or after the ordinary school business, and under the following conditions:—

1st. That no child whose parent or guardian objects shall be required, directly or indirectly, to be present at such reading.

2nd. That in order that no child whose parent or guardian objects may be present at the reading of the books above specified, public notification of the time set apart for such

reading shall be inserted in large letters in the time-table of the school; that there shall be a sufficient interval between the conclusion of the ordinary school business and the commencement of such reading; and that the teacher shall immediately before its commencement announce distinctly to the pupils, that any child whose parent or guardian so desires, may then retire.

3rd. That in every such case there shall be, exclusive of the time set apart for such reading, sufficient time devoted each day to the ordinary school business, in order that those children who do not join in the reading of the books may enjoy ample means of literary instruction in the school-room.

Master Murphy's Amendments.

1st. That the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity* be omitted from the foregoing resolution.

2nd. That the *Lessons on Christian Evidences* be omitted from the list of "Books not published but sanctioned by the Commissioners of National Education."

After some discussion, Master Murphy withdraws his first amendment, and substitutes the following:—

That the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity* be omitted from the list of books published by the Board.

The Commissioners proceed to consider Master Murphy's two amendments in connexion with Baron Greene's resolution.

The Commissioners determine not to come to a final decision on the whole question, but to ascertain and to record the opinion of each member present, with regard to Baron Greene's resolution, and the two amendments thereto, as proposed by Master Murphy.

Each Commissioner then states his opinion, as follows:—

1. In favour of both amendments should Baron Greene's resolution be passed—

1. Right Rev. Bishop Denvir.

2. Right Hon. M. Brady, Lord Chancellor.

3. Sir T. N. Redington, K.C.B.
4. Very Rev. Dean Meyler.
5. Right Hon. A. Macdonnell.
6. J. J. Murphy, Esq.
7. James O'Ferrall, Esq.

2. Against both amendments—

Right Hon. F. Blackburne.

3. Against the first amendment—i.e., against the proposition that the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity* be omitted from the list of books published by the Board—

1. Dr. Henry.
2. James Gibson, Esq.
3. Robert Andrews, Esq.

4. In favour of Amendment No. 2—i.e., for the withdrawal of the *Easy Lessons on Christian Evidences* from the list of books sanctioned but not published by the Board—

All the Commissioners present, with the exception of the Right Hon. F. Blackburne.

5. In favour of Baron Greene's resolution—

1. Right Hon. M. Brady, Lord Chancellor.
2. Right Hon. F. Blackburne.
3. Rev. Dr. Henry.
4. Right Hon. A. Macdonnell.
5. James Gibson, Esq.
6. James O'Ferrall, Esq.
7. Robert Andrews, Esq.

Note.—Of the above seven, one alone, Mr. Blackburne, supported the resolution unconditionally; of the remainder, some supported it on condition that one of the books on Christian Evidences—others that both of the books—should be removed from the list of books published or sanctioned by the Board.

6. Against Baron Greene's resolution—

1. Right Rev. Dr. Denvir.
2. Very Rev. Dean Meyler.
3. Sir T. N. Redington.
4. J. J. Murphy, Esq.

Note.—These four opposed the resolution whether either or both of the books were withdrawn from the list or not.

7. In case both the books referred to in the amendments be retained on the list of books which may be used in a National School, all the Commissioners present, with the exception of Mr. Blackburne, are of opinion that no alteration should be made in Rule 8, with regard to the use of the *Scripture Lessons*, as at present worded.

The following Members are absent:—His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, Right Hon. Baron Greene, the Marquis of Kildare, and the Right Hon. Lord Bellew. Lord Bellew did not communicate his opinion.

Ordered,—That Mr. Cross, Secretary, forward to the Lord Lieutenant, and also to the Archbishop of Dublin, a statement of this day's proceedings.

(D.)

Return to an Order of the House of Lords, dated the 18th July, 1853, for copy of a Resolution lately adopted by the Board of National Education in Ireland, excluding the use of certain Books for the Schools under their Management.

Extract from the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Meeting of the Board of National Education, held 8th July, 1853.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:—The Right Hon. the Lord Chancellor; The Right Hon. F. Blackburne; the Rev. Dr. Henry, President, Queen's College, Belfast; J. J. Murphy, Esq., Master in Chancery; James O'Ferrall, Esq.; Robert

Andrews, Esq., LL.D., Q.C.; Right Hon. Alexander Macdonnell, Resident Commissioner.

The Commissioners refer to and take into consideration the proceedings of the special meeting held on the 17th of June, 1853, with reference to rule 8, section II., as to the use of the *Scripture Lessons*, *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, and the *Book of Sacred Poetry*.

Ordered,—1st. That in accordance with the opinion expressed on that occasion by seven members out of eleven present, the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity* be withdrawn from the list of books published by direction of the Commissioners.

2ndly. That, in accordance with the opinion expressed by ten members, the *Introductory Lessons on Christian Evidences* be also withdrawn from the list of books not published, but sanctioned by the Commissioners.

3rdly. That, in accordance with the opinion expressed by seven members, the rule 8, section II., (which is as follows) be rescinded:—

“The Commissioners do not insist on the *Scripture Lessons*, *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, or *Book of Sacred Poetry* being read in any of the National Schools, nor do they allow them to be read during the time of secular or literary instruction in any school attended by children whose parents or guardians object to their being so read. In such case the Commissioners prohibit the use of them, except at the times of religious instruction, when the persons giving it may use these books, or not, as they think proper.”

And that the following resolution, proposed by the Right Hon. Baron Greene, omitting the words, *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, be substituted:—

“The Commissioners do not insist on the *Scripture Extracts*, *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, or *Book of Sacred Poetry* being read in any of the National Schools, nor do they allow them to be read as part of the ordinary school business (during which all children, of whatever denomination they may be, are required to attend) in any school

attended by children whose parents or guardians object to their being so read by their children. In such case the Commissioners prohibit the use of these books, except at times set apart for the purpose, either before or after the ordinary school business, and under the following conditions:—

“ 1st. That no child whose parent or guardian objects shall be required directly or indirectly to be present at such reading.

“ 2nd. That in order that no child whose parent or guardian objects may be present at the reading of the books above specified, public notification of the time set apart for such reading shall be inserted in large letters in the ‘time-table’ of the school, that there shall be a sufficient interval between the conclusion of the ordinary school business and the commencement of such reading, and that the teachers shall, immediately before its commencement, announce distinctly to the pupils that any child whose parent or guardian so desires may then retire.

“ 3rd. That in every such case there shall be, exclusive of the time set apart for such reading, sufficient time devoted each day to the ordinary school business, in order that those children who do not join in the reading of the books may enjoy ample means of literary instruction in the school-room.”

Ordered,—That the foregoing resolutions take effect from the present date.

Ordered,—That the forthcoming Report (nineteenth) of the Commissioners be prepared and submitted for their consideration at the earliest practicable period, and that there be embodied therein a statement of the course now adopted with reference to rule 8, and to the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity*, and the *Lessons on Christian Evidences*.

Ordered,—That copies of the foregoing proceedings be transmitted to the Lord Lieutenant, also to the Archbishop of Dublin, and to the members of the Board not present at this meeting.

James O’Ferrall, Esq., withdraws his amendments to the resolution proposed by the Right Hon. Baron Greene.

Master Murphy reiterates the statement made by him at the meeting on the 17th June, that if rule 8 underwent no alteration, he was satisfied that the *Lessons on the Truth of Christianity* and the *Lessons on Christian Evidences* should remain on the list of books published or sanctioned by the Board.

MAURICE CROSS, } Secretaries.
JAMES KELLY, }

Education Office, Dublin, 25th July, 1853.

(E.)

Copy of Letter from the Archbishop of Dublin to the Lord Lieutenant, notifying that he has ceased to be a Member of the National Education Board.

Palace, July 26, 1853.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Pursuant to the communication made a short time ago, I have now to announce to Government, through your Excellency, and to the Commissioners, that I am no longer a member of the Education Board.

When I found myself under the painful necessity of appealing to your Excellency against the recent proceedings of the Board, which I regard as a departure from the existing system, such as we were not justified in making, I added, that, if I obtained no redress from Government, I should consider myself as *dismissed*.

I have purposely avoided using the word “resignation,” lest I should be understood to have altered my views of the National System, or to withdraw from it as no longer approving it. The reverse is the fact. I am as much attached to the system as ever, and as ready as ever to carry it on. And it is precisely because I do retain these views that I am driven to

the present step. Feeling that the system which has flourished for above twenty-one years is virtually abandoned, and consequently that the office I have hitherto held is in reality suppressed, it would not be fair for me to deceive Parliament and the public by pretending to go on, carrying out the system, which in truth is fundamentally changed.

If I were to wait for the final determination of Government on the matters in debate, the decision of the Board *in the meantime taking effect*, I should be placed altogether in a false position. By withholding *my* decision, to withdraw, while the Commissioners do *not* withhold *theirs*, but carry it out in practice, I should be held responsible—and justly—for proceedings which I not only believe, but am *known* to believe, to be unjustifiable.

When I spoke of the Commissioners having exceeded their “powers,” and of their having no “right” to prohibit books that have received the unanimous sanction of the Board, of course I was speaking of *fair and equitable* rights. As for legal rights, or obligations enforced by legal penalties, these were not in my mind. I am considering what a man of honour would hold himself bound to do, or debarred from doing, in the faithful discharge of a public trust solemnly confided to him. I am well aware that a man may sometimes find himself so circumstanced as to have the “power,” with *legal impunity*, to break faith with his neighbour—to disappoint reasonable expectations which he knows to exist, and has himself contributed to raise; to “keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope.”

But to any one judging fairly it must be evident that the “full control over the books to be used” given to the Commissioners, was *always understood to mean* that no books were to be used *without* their unanimous sanction; and that any book thus sanctioned was to be supplied to any school in connexion with the Board, and might be used therein if the Patron approved it. That a book so sanctioned should be liable to be afterwards *prohibited*, is what never was at all contemplated by any of the *Ministries* who have supported

the system, or by any *Parliament* that has voted grants to it, or by any *members* of Parliament *favourable* or *hostile* to the schools. This is plainly proved by all the debates—and they have been very numerous—that have ever taken place on the subject. In the debate, lately, on a motion of Lord Clancarty's, and in every debate on the motion for a Grant for the Schools, and on many other occasions, reference has been made (both by advocates and opponents) to the *list of the books* sanctioned by the Board. Never did any opponent come forward and say, "This is all a delusion; we are wasting time in discussing the merits of these books; since some of them may probably be struck off the list next week, and some more the week after. The list of books is merely a *bait* to allure the over-trustful into placing schools under the Board; and as soon as the deception has succeeded, the books which had chiefly aided in it will be prohibited."

And if any one *had* brought forward such a surmise, it cannot be doubted that it would have been repelled with indignation and disgust. This being the case, it is plain that to depart from the system in this point, and to introduce an innovation never *contemplated* by any one *when the grants were moved for* and voted, would be to divert the public money from the purpose for which it was granted. And it is also a gross injustice towards the many hundred Patrons of schools who were invited and induced to place them under the Board on the strength of an implied promise fully understood by all parties, and acted on for twenty-one years, but which it is now proposed to violate.

When, on various occasions formerly, attempts were made by some parties among Protestants to introduce, for their purposes, such a "modification" of the system as would have amounted to a subversion of it, I always strenuously opposed any such unwarrantable changes. I never would, nor ever will, consent to break faith either with Roman-catholics or with Protestants.

And that the recent proceedings of the Board (even if not followed up—and I cannot doubt they will be by further

steps in the same direction) do amount to a breach of faith with the public, and involve a *misapplication of the public money*, is a conclusion which appears perfectly evident both to myself and to all those confidential advisers (including some of the ablest and most upright characters in existence) with whom I have discussed the subject.

I will take the liberty of suggesting, in conclusion,—not as a Commissioner, but as a Patron of a National School,—that measures should be taken to secure at least the schools (amounting to several hundreds) which are *actually using* the books proposed to be discarded, from being deprived of the advantage they have hitherto enjoyed. The Patrons of those schools, if thus grievously wronged, will be likely to bring forward their complaints in a manner which may lead to such contests as are much to be deprecated.

(Signed)

RD. DUBLIN.

(F.)

List of District Model-schools, showing in which of them the Scripture Lessons, Lessons on the Truth of Christianity, and Sacred Poetry, are read or not, and which of them.

DISTRICT MODEL-SCHOOLS.

BOOKS USED.

		Scripture Lessons.	
Ballymena	{	Lessons on the Truth of Christianity.	
Coleraine		Sacred Poetry.	
Trim		Scripture Lessons.	
	{	Sacred Poetry.	
Dunmanway		Scripture Lessons.	

DISTRICT MODEL-SCHOOLS.

BOOKS USED.

Athy	}	Sacred Poetry.
Bailieboro'		
Clonmel		
Newry		
Galway		None of the above books.

Central Model-schools . .	{	Scripture Lessons.
	}	Sacred Poetry.
West Dublin Model-schools		Sacred Poetry.
Glasnevin Industrial . . .		Scripture Lessons.

*Letter from the Right Hon. Baron Greene to the Archbishop
of Dublin.*

Stephen's Green, August 8, 1853.

MY DEAR LORD,

Your Grace, I understand, purposes to make a statement of the transactions, which resulted in our retirement from the Board of National Education. There is one portion of them to which I wish to direct your Grace's attention. I need scarcely say, that the Resolutions which I originally proposed were not intended to introduce, or in any manner sanction, any innovation in the then existing system of education. On the contrary, it must be obvious, I think, from the reading of them, that they were based upon the assumption that no important change was to be made. The object of them was merely to guard against the possibility, that any child, with respect to whom an objection should be made, should be compelled to read, or even exposed to solicitation to read, any of the three books to which they related. The Resolutions were unnecessary and unmeaning, except upon the supposition, that the three books were to

continue, as theretofore, to constitute a part of ordinary instruction. Upon my signifying my intention to propose these Resolutions, notices were given of two Amendments, the adoption of either of which would have the effect of negating the original Motion. The proposed Resolutions and the Amendments were taken into consideration on the 17th of June last. I was on that day in London, and, of course, have no personal knowledge of what occurred. Having afterwards learned that my Resolutions were negated, and the Amendments carried, one by a majority of ten to one, and the other by a majority of seven to four, I at once determined to resign, and awaited only a formal communication of the proceedings of the 17th of June. Not having received it, I attended at a meeting of the Board, after my return to Dublin, and then suggested the propriety of having a regular entry or minute made of the opinions of the respective majorities at the discussion of the 17th of June, and of some formal resolutions or orders in conformity with them. This was considered right, and was, as I was informed, to be done on the next Board-day, the 8th of July. On that day I was absent on the circuit, and it was not until the 18th of July, that a copy was furnished to me of the minutes of the proceedings of the 8th. Immediately upon the receipt of it, I wrote a letter to the Lord-Lieutenant, tendering my resignation. Entertaining no doubt that what had taken place on the 8th of July was the mere formal record of the transactions of the 17th of June, I did not read the copy furnished to me with as much care as perhaps I ought. I put it aside, after I had forwarded my resignation, and in consequence of the pressure of business, did not recur to it, until I learned, to my great surprise, that my conduct had been animadverted upon, and that I had been accused of being instrumental to opening the door to a serious alteration in the system of National Education. I then looked more attentively at the copy of the orders of the 8th of July, and found, that instead of simply carrying out and formally recording the proceedings of the 17th of June, they varied from the latter in some

important respects. My Resolutions, which applied to the three books, are stated to have been,—not rejected, as in fact they were,—but *adopted* with regard to two of the books, omitting the third. Of this *modification* of the Resolutions, I never received any notice, and, it is unnecessary to say, I never sanctioned it. When I originally announced my intention to bring them forward, no intimation was given of any amendment, to the effect that they should be adopted, as to one or two of the books, and that the other or others should be omitted from their operation. Had I been apprized of the possibility of such a result, I should have felt myself bound to consider the propriety of altogether withdrawing them. The consequence of my not having been allowed this opportunity, has been, it appears, to expose me to the suspicion of having been conducive to an act which I do not approve, and with respect to which I had no possibility of exercising any judgment. Nor is this the only point in which the acts of the 8th of July differ from the proceedings of which they were to have been the only formal expression. By one of them, the Eighth Rule is rescinded. I have never had any notice or intimation of any Motion for that purpose. No such Amendment was alluded to at the meeting at which notice was given of the original Resolutions. I do not wish to be understood as offering any opinion as to the necessity or expediency of annulling or altering the Eighth Rule. I mean only to say, that nothing which took place on the 17th of June, so far as I know, warranted the act as a part of the proceedings of that day. Under what circumstances those proceedings were recorded in the form adopted on the 8th of July, I am altogether ignorant. But, without notice to me, an use has been made of the original Resolutions, which I could not anticipate, and never authorized. This, I take for granted, has led to the misconception of my motives to which I have adverted. I was willing to consent to certain regulations of the practice in the Schools, for the purpose of preventing differences, and meeting conscientious scruples, but necessarily upon the understanding that my proposition should

apply to all the books used. In the order as framed, however, advantage has been taken of the concessions offered by me as to two of the books, whilst the third has been wholly excluded. My object has thus been disappointed, and at the same time the consideration which I was ready to accord as the price of it has been, partially at least, accepted. It is but right, therefore, that I should disclaim any participation in the order, as recorded, and all responsibility connected with it. Your Grace has probably already seen the matter in its true light, but I am anxious that your Grace should distinctly understand how far there is any just ground for the supposition that the Resolutions which I proposed have laid a foundation for the recent order.

Believe me,

My dear Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient,

RICHARD W. GREENE.

His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin.

ON
THE PRESENT STATE
OF
EGYPT.

COMPILED FROM THE UNPUBLISHED JOURNALS OF RECENT
TRAVELLERS.

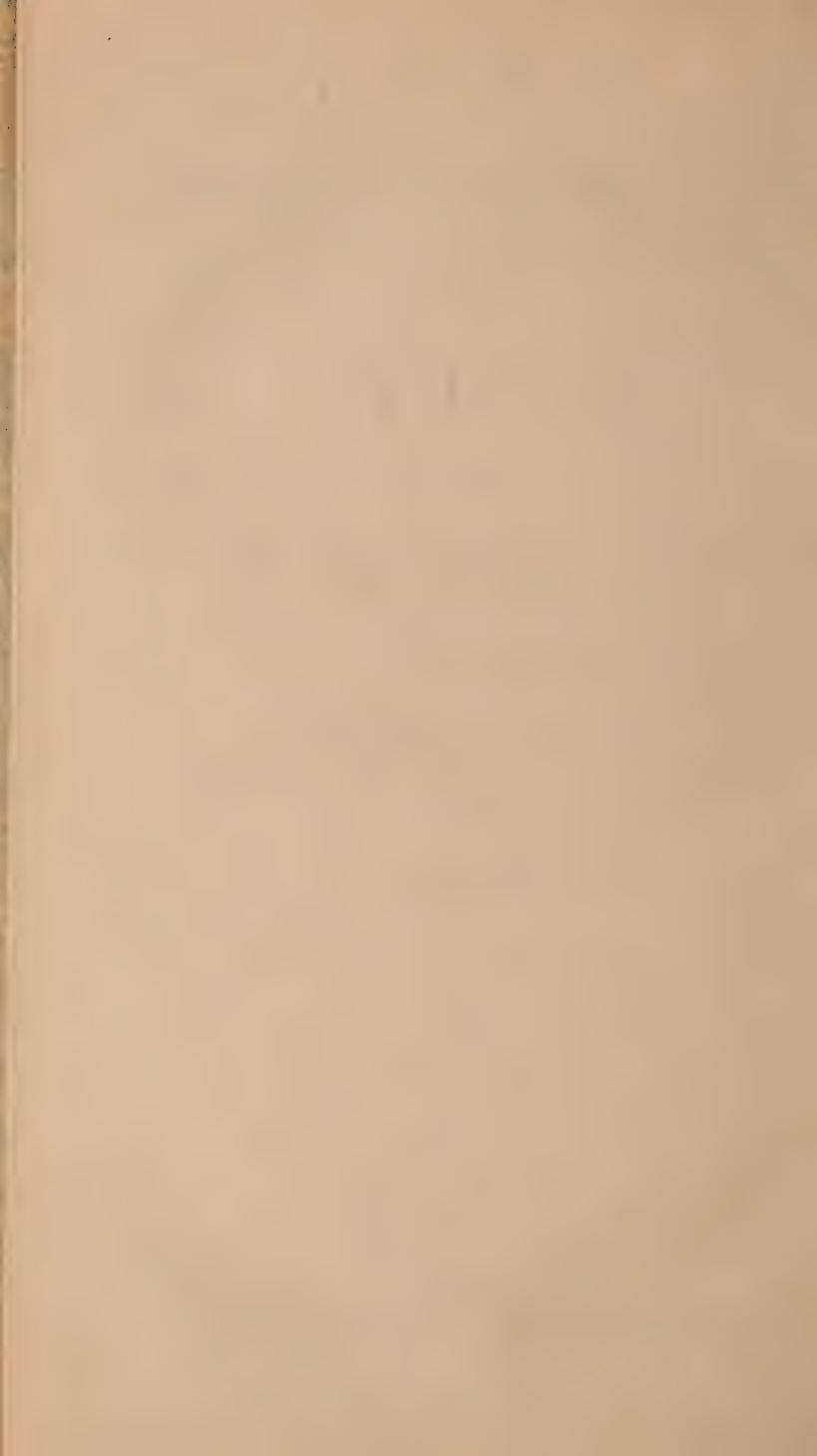
A LECTURE DELIVERED BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER AND SON, WEST STRAND.

1858.



TO

N. W. SENIOR, Esq.

THIS LECTURE,

CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF EXTRACTS FROM HIS

JOURNAL,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY THE COMPILER.

PRESENT STATE OF EGYPT.

IT is not my design to treat of the wondrous antiquities of Egypt ; its Hieroglyphics, its Temples, and its Pyramids ; nor shall I attempt any description of the extraordinary physical features of the country ; one portion of it an unreclaimable desert, another—close bordering on that—of an admirable fertility, almost rainless, but well watered by the Nile.

On these subjects many curious and interesting works have been written, which will well repay perusal ; but I think it will also be interesting, and not altogether unprofitable, to bring before you a few brief notices of the political and social condition of the country, its government, and the habits and notions of the people. For, the Egyptian Pyramids do not differ more from our buildings, or the ancient hieroglyphics from our writing, than the Egyptian institutions, and customs, and modes of thought, do from ours.

The particulars which I propose to lay before you are what I have learned from some friends who have lately been residing in Egypt. The great mass of the population of Egypt consists of what are called Fellahin, which is the plural of Fellah. They are Mahometans, and their language is Arabic ; but they are believed by all the most competent judges to be a mixed race, partly Arabs and partly Coptic, derived from intermarriages between Arabians and those Copts—the ancient possessors, as is generally believed, of Egypt—who have embraced the Mussulman faith. There are also, on the borders of the desert, many tribes of Bedouins, who are pure Arabs, and are described as differing considerably in features from the above. Then there are Copts, though in no great numbers (about 217,000), who have remained separate, and retain the profession of Christianity.

But the Coptic language, in which their Scriptures are written, and their religious service performed, is a dead language. There are also in Egypt a few scattered Syrian and Greek Christians, and a very small number of Armenians. The Jews are estimated at about 5000, though some estimate them at nearly twice that number; and the Turks, who hold almost all the chief offices, and the greater part of the property, are supposed not to exceed 10,000, out of a total population believed to be about five millions. These speak the Turkish language; and many of them know little or nothing of any other.

The Government, as has almost always been the case with all Oriental nations, is purely monarchical. Egypt is reckoned a portion of the Ottoman Empire, and is governed by a Viceroy. But the Viceroy is something intermediate between an independent sovereign and a provincial governor, and the office is understood to be hereditary. Tribute is paid to the Turkish Sultan, and nominally allegiance to him is professed; but the Viceroy, though always a Turk by extraction, if not by birth, governs, in most points, according to his own pleasure, and in some instances has even waged war with the Sultan. Much mutual jealousy almost always prevails; the more, because the terms of the connexion are undefined and uncertain, so that intrigues and counter-manceuvres are perpetually going on; the one party wishing to establish a more complete dependence, and the other a more complete independence, of Egypt on Constantinople. But as for any constitutional check on the Ruler's power, for the protection of the subjects' liberty, that is a thing unknown among Orientals.

An absolute monarchy, we, and the people of many other European nations, would probably consider as, on the whole, a bad institution. But there are several points in which the expectations which many persons might be inclined to form respecting such a government would be the reverse of the facts. They might expect it to possess—with all its evils—some advantages which experience shows it does not possess.

For instance, it might naturally be expected that under a despotism, the persons appointed to each office would be, if not really the most fit, yet at least selected as being believed so: the Sovereign having his choice unrestricted by considerations of

parliamentary influence, which, in a representative government, often render necessary the advancement of those whom the Sovereign does not really prefer. And again—an absolute monarchy might—as some would suppose, visit with such summary and severe punishment (though sometimes, perhaps, over-severe) any misconduct of officials, as most effectually to deter from wrong-doing. No one, in short, would be able, it might be thought, to purchase either undeserved promotion, or impunity for abuse of power, by his own or his family's popular influence.

And this was the very argument urged (according to the testimony of several independent witnesses) by a late eminent European Autocrat, to justify his avowed and deep detestation of a constitutional monarchy. A pure republic, it is said, or an absolute king, he did not object to ; but a limited regal government, with a popular representation, he considered as the very hot-bed of such corruption as he boasted of being exempt from.

But now, how stand the facts, as reported by all, without exception, who have had opportunities of ascertaining them ? There is, in that very empire, more corrupt administration of justice, more peculation, more malversation of every kind, among officials, going on every year, than among us in half a century. And, by the testimony of all travellers, there is in Egypt a still greater amount of all these abuses.

One of the appointments which the Sultan of Constantinople retains in his own hands, is that of the chief Cadi (the head magistrate) of the city of Cairo. It is notoriously sold to the best bidder ; and that, from year to year—for he must be annually confirmed in his post. And the Turk who has purchased it comes from Constantinople, quite ignorant, for the most part, of the language of the people whose judge he is to be, and bent on reimbursing himself as amply as possible for his outlay.

Now, let any one consider what would be our condition, if our chief magistrates were sent from France or Spain, quite ignorant of our language, having purchased their offices, and possessing summary jurisdiction without the intervention of a jury.

And the other Officials in Egypt seem, by all accounts, to be intent only on squeezing as much profit as possible out of those placed under them, without the slightest regard to justice or to

humanity. For nothing can be more erroneous than the notion that a despot, though he may himself fleece and oppress his people, will effectually prohibit others from doing so. On the contrary, he is himself continually cheated by his subordinates ; and they plunder and tyrannize over his people.

You are probably aware that it is on canals for carrying the Nile-water for irrigation that the cultivation of Egypt almost entirely depends. A traveller, who remarked the ill-cultivated condition of a certain district, was informed, in reply to his inquiry, that this was from its canal not having been cleaned out for several years. This operation is essential, because else the bed soon becomes choked up with mud. The persons, it seems, whose office it is to see that the canals are duly cleaned out, receive a salary equal to about 50*l.* of our money. But they can make 200*l.* or 300*l.* a-year by taking bribes to report work done that has *not* been done. One inspector was said to have gained two thousand dollars in one year for false reports.

It was proposed to an Egyptian Viceroy to substitute for an immense number of wind-mills which grind corn for his army, a steam-mill which would perform the work at half the cost. But the proposal was not adopted, partly, it seems, because there are about 500 persons employed about the mills, well paid, and with little to do ; and partly because there are a few persons of great influence to whom the existing system is advantageous ; not more than three-quarters of the wheat that is sent to the mills returning. Some part of the profit finds its way as hush-money to the subordinate officers ; but the greater part to those high in office.

Again, it being proposed to make a canal in a place where it was much needed, a person in high office was sent to have the ground inspected, and a report made of the cost. The engineer whom he employed sent in an estimate of 40,000 labourers for two months. But it so happened, in this case, that the scheme of speculation which had been formed was defeated by the inspection of another person in office (sent down on account of suspicions which had arisen), who ascertained that about 6000 workmen could easily complete the work in a fortnight. The engineer admitted this to him, but assured him that he had been ordered to make the estimate he did ; and that he thought

he *might* escape punishment for that falsification, while he was quite certain that if he refused, his destruction was inevitable. Of course the difference between the estimated and the real cost had been designed to go into the pocket of the Commissioner.

All who have the superintendence of public works are authorised to press the Fellahs into the service, at a rate of wages fixed for them, and of which the far greater portion is paid them in kind ; that is, in food of the coarsest and worst description ; and they are kept to work by overseers, literally under the lash. But these are degrees of cruelty which are generally disapproved by the greater part even of the Turkish Officials. One of them was asked, on one occasion, by another, who was on a visit to him, whether the report was true which he had heard, of his employing a somewhat novel mode of keeping his workmen in order, by putting them between two boards and sawing them asunder when they displeased him. He replied by owning that he had formerly resorted to that mode, but that he had discontinued it, from finding that it 'did not answer.' The other observed to my informant that he could not have partaken of the man's coffee if he had been pursuing such a course ; but that as it seemed he had left it off, he had not scrupled to drink coffee with him.

As for *public spirit*, it is a thing which, under a despotism, is so little looked for, or believed in, that a man who evinces any, is likely to be at once suspected of some secret sinister design. For instance, a person in office, who was desirous of improving the sanitary condition of the people, and who was inclined to attribute much of the prevailing mortality to the *over-crowded* state of the villages, applied to have a return made out of the area and the population of each village. He was immediately dismissed from the then Viceroy's service. It was supposed impossible he could make such inquiries but from some secret evil design of his own.

It might be supposed, however, by some, that, though a despot is not always well served, such a government as that of Egypt would at least have the advantage of complete and prompt *obedience* from the subjects, though its commands might sometimes be harsh ; and that there would be nothing corre-

sponding to that evasion or defiance of law, which sometimes occurs in free countries.

But here again the fact is at variance with such an expectation. Those brought up under an arbitrary government, and accustomed to consider that, even with the most blameless conduct, they have no security for their persons or property,—such men are found (1) to regard the government as their natural enemy, which it is right and advisable always to defeat or escape from, when possible ; and (2) to become *reckless* of the future ;—a future which admits of no certain calculation. And they thence eagerly seize on any *immediate* advantage, and take their chance for what may follow.

One instance, may serve as a specimen of this. A person employed by the Viceroy to construct some docks, told my informant the following anecdote :—

‘ When I was making those docks, I found the expense of obtaining Puzzuoli-cement from Italy, considerable. A sample of clay fit for the purpose was brought to me, and I ascertained that it was to be found at Gourés (a village on the Nile). I went thither, sent for the chief man [or Sheich] and told him that I understood that there was in the lands of his village the clay of which I showed him a specimen. His countenance fell, and he assured me that the whole bed had been worked out. I walked over the village, and soon found that the stratum, instead of being exhausted, was, in fact, almost inexhaustible. Half the land belonging to the village consisted of it. Thereupon I ordered him to provide within a fixed time a certain number of bricks. As soon as I heard that they were ready I went to look at them, but found them unburnt.

‘ We cannot,’ said the Sheich, ‘ burn bricks in this village except when the Nile is at its lowest. At present it fills our kilns. We are forced to send our clay to Upper Egypt, if it is to be burnt.’ I looked at his kilns, and, in fact, they were full of water. But as they stood many feet above the level of the Nile, and the Nile was then increasing, it was obvious that the water had been deposited not by the Nile, but by the *villagers*. It was just the trick of an Egyptian ; capable of deceiving a Turk, but no one else.’ ‘ You rascal,’ I said, ‘ the governor of the

province comes here this evening, and five minutes after you will be hanged before your own door.' These people have no pity themselves, and never believe that they shall be treated with pity. He fully expected to be hanged; he tore his haich, he covered himself with sand, he threw himself on the ground, he kissed my shoe, and the skirt of my coat; and when I seized him to raise him up, his hand was icy. I gave him hopes of forgiveness if the bricks were duly burnt. The next day, as I returned from looking at the preparations for heating the kilns, I found my boats full of sheep and calves and fowls. 'They are a present,' said my servant, 'from the Sheich.' He had recourse to the argument which he thought most likely to soften me; and it was with great difficulty that I made him understand that they must be taken back.

'Were the villagers paid for their work?' I asked.

'They were *supposed* to be paid,' he answered, but the appointed scale was low, and a great part—perhaps the whole of what they were entitled to—was intercepted in its progress. The treatment of the Israelites in the time of Moses is a fair specimen of the administration which now prevails in Egypt, and probably has prevailed for the last 5000 years. Want of straw, or even want of clay would no more be admitted as an excuse by the officers of the Pasha than it was by the officers of Pharaoh. 'Ye are idle, ye are idle,' would be the answer.

One advantage, however, that of *security*, many would expect to find in a despotic government. In a free country those who are disaffected to the government may be carrying on plots that are strongly suspected, or even sufficiently known, to leave no moral doubt on any one's mind, yet of which no legal proof can be obtained. Or they may keep within the letter of the law in proceedings quite contrary to the spirit of it; and if a new Act of Parliament be passed to meet the case, they may find some new evasion of the new enactment. In an absolute monarchy, on the contrary, the least suspicion of any design against the ruler's person or power is visited with summary vengeance. And though the innocent are likely often to suffer with the guilty, it might be supposed that the guilty would have no chance of escape, and that all plots would be nipped in the bud.

But the fact is otherwise ; and it confirms the Latin proverb that ‘He who is feared by many must live in fear of many.’ (*Necesse est multos timeat, quem multi timent.*)

A late Viceroy of Egypt having been found dead in his bed, it was certified by the surgeons appointed to examine the body, that he had died of apoplexy. They are believed to have received instructions to that effect from persons whom they dared not disobey. But few have any doubt that he was smothered by some of his domestics. Two men are pointed out, and well known as the perpetrators—or among the perpetrators—of the deed. But they enjoy perfect impunity, inasmuch as it had been officially and publicly stated that the death was natural. Some believe that only those two persons were concerned ; others say five. And while some attribute the act to threats which the Viceroy had uttered against these men, others think that the assassination was planned by some members of his own family. But amidst all these conflicting opinions, all except a very few agree that assassination did take place.

This man, however, it must be owned, was far beyond the average in point of tyranny. It is reported, that when some of the many palaces he built (for that was his passion) shall be pulled down, there will be fearful revelations made ; for he is commonly believed to have been in the habit of ordering a man to be *built up* within a wall. And it is certain that on one occasion he sewed up with his own hands the mouth of one of the women of his harem, and so left her to die of hunger, for having transgressed an order of his against smoking. He spoke of it himself to the person who told my informant, and who had remarked on his fingers being bloody. It is remarkable, however, that the representations, current in Europe of this monster, were far less unfavourable than what are circulated respecting his successor, a Viceroy about whom there are indeed great differences of opinion, but who is allowed by all to be at least better than the other. The supposed reason of this is, that the one paid, and the other refused to pay, a large stipend to the correspondent of an influential English newspaper. If the editor of a journal be himself inaccessible to bribes, it does not follow that all his foreign agents will be so.

But despots who govern with much less cruelty than the man just mentioned, yet generally govern so as to make their overthrow desirable to a large portion of their subjects. Tax-payers who had not ready money to pay their taxes, but only produce, paid their taxes in kind (and some, I believe, were compelled to pay in kind rather than in money), at a *rate fixed by the collector*, who valued their corn or other produce at about one-half of the market-price. And public creditors, many of them persons whose land had been taken from them with the promise of an annual payment in lieu of it, were paid the *same number* of piastres as had been originally fixed, the piastre meantime having been reduced to less *than a quarter* of its proper value—from about tenpence English, to about nine farthings. The pressing of soldiers, also, is a dreadful hardship to many of the peasants, who have families dependent on their labour for support. My informant one day, seeing a poor woman sobbing bitterly, inquired of her the cause of her grief. She was a widow, with one daughter and one son. On his labour they had subsisted, and he being just carried off to the army, she and her daughter, she said, must starve. When my friend soon after met with a troop of recruits marching to the depôt, he did not wonder to see them *chained* two and two.

Now, people who are thus governed are apt to think (though often very erroneously) that any change is likely to be for the better.

But whatever may be the condition of the *subjects* of an absolute monarchy, the Royal family—*all* its members—many would suppose to be kept in the enjoyment of everything that the present life can bestow. On the contrary, their lives are not safe from one another, and their domestic happiness is cruelly sacrificed. This arises in great measure from the Turkish law of succession, which makes the crown descend, not to the son necessarily of the last sovereign, but to the *eldest* male of the family; often, therefore, to a brother or a nephew, if there be any older than the Sultan's or Viceroy's son. Hence the well-known practice among the Turkish rulers of cutting off their brothers; and the total amount of royal infanticide that goes on is what sounds to European ears almost incredible. But it is well

known that a brother or younger son of a Turkish sovereign is to have *no children*. A daughter, indeed, or sister of the sovereign may rear *female* children, but males must be cut off as soon as born. No issue whatever, male or female, is allowed to the brother or younger son. The unnatural law of succession is thus eluded by unnatural expedients.

And of the children of the sovereign himself—often very numerous—not above one in ten, scarcely, perhaps, one in twenty, are reared. They are entrusted from infancy to the care—if such a word as *care* can be so applied—of persons, many of whom either wish them to die, or do not care for them; and they often fall a sacrifice to wilful neglect.

With such a low tone of morality, and so little regard for human life, and without any such reference to public opinion as exists among us, it may easily be understood how unsafe must be the lives of persons of high family or station, and those connected with them. Well authenticated instances indeed of persons who have been secretly made away with, it is, of course, difficult to produce, on account of that very state of things which renders such occurrences probable. It is likely that many cases of this kind which are reported are not true, and that very many more *have* occurred which were hardly at all suspected. Poison, there is no doubt, is not unfrequently resorted to. One instance I know of, in which there is every reason to believe poison to have been administered to a European, who narrowly escaped with life.

The expression is not uncommon of a person's having 'taken a cup of coffee too much.' On every occasion of a visit, coffee is presented, which it would be reckoned uncivil to refuse; and this affords a most favourable occasion for poisoning.

The carelessness about human life and human happiness or suffering which I have just adverted to, is one of the most curious characteristics of Oriental character, especially when contrasted with their scrupulous tenderness towards the brute creation. Bacon, in his *Essay on Goodness* [what in modern language is called 'benevolence'], remarks that it is so essential a part of Man, that when not exercised towards his fellow-men, it finds, as it were, a kind of vent towards other animals. 'The Turks,' says he, 'are a cruel people, but yet they are kind to beasts.' Two

centuries and a half after Bacon's time, this is the statement given to my friend by a resident in Cairo. "The remark that Orientals are not to be judged according to European notions, is so obvious that it has become trite; but on no point is the difference between the two minds more striking than in the respect for life.

The European cares nothing for brute-life. He destroys the lower animals without scruple whenever it suits his convenience, his pleasure, or his caprice. The Mussulman preserves the lives of the lower animals solicitously. I say the *lives*; for they do sometimes ill-use their beasts of burden, though they scruple to *kill* except for food or in self-defence. Though the Mussulman considers the dog impure, and never makes a friend of him, he thinks it sinful to kill him, and allows the neighbourhood, and even the streets, of his towns, to be infested by packs of masterless brutes which you would get rid of in London in one day. The beggar does not venture to destroy his vermin; he puts them tenderly on the ground, to be caught up into the clothes of the next passer-by. There are hospitals at Cairo for superannuated cats, where they are fed at the public expense.

But to *human* life he is utterly indifferent. He extinguishes it with much less scruple than that with which you shoot a horse past his work. Abbas, the last Viceroy, when a boy, had his pastrycook bastinadoed to death. Mohammed Ali mildly reproved him for it, as you would correct a child for killing a butterfly. He explained to his little grandson that such things ought not to be done without a motive."

The slight sketch I have given of an Oriental system of government may perhaps have caused you to doubt how far the poet's assertion is borne out, who says—

‘Of all the various ills that men endure
How small the part that kings can cause or cure.’

But it would be most unfair to attribute to misgovernment all—or all the most important—of the evils that are to be found in Egypt and in other Eastern countries. A large portion is the result of the gross ignorance and strange superstitions of the

people; and how far—or whether at all—the Government is responsible for that ignorance and ill-education, it would not be easy to decide.

One of the most noxious of their superstitions (as far as regards temporal well-being) is their dread of the *evil eye*. The notion is very widely spread in the East, and very ancient; so as to have given a tinge to popular language. For though there is a Greek word answering to our word ‘envy,’ the New Testament writers generally use the expression of ‘evil eye;’ as for instance ‘Is thine eye evil because I am good?’ *i.e.*, ‘Art thou envious because I am bountiful?’

Bacon, in his *Essay on Envy*, speaks of the notion as prevalent among ourselves in his time, and as one to which he did not altogether himself refuse credence.

‘There be none of the affections,’ he says, ‘which have been noted to fascinate or bewitch, but love and envy: they both have vehement wishes; they frame themselves readily into imaginations and suggestions; and they come easily into the eye, especially upon the presence of the objects; which are the points that conduce to fascination, if any such thing there be. We see likewise, the Scripture calleth envy an evil eye; and the astrologers call the evil influences of the stars evil *aspects*; so that still there seemeth to be acknowledged in the act of envy an ejaculation or irradiation of the eye. Nay, some have been so curious as to note that the times when the stroke or percussion of an evil eye doth most hurt, are when the party envied is beheld in glory or triumph; for that sets an edge upon envy; and besides, at such times the spirits of the persons envied do come forth most into the outward parts and so meet the blow.’ Bacon might have added that the very word ‘invidere,’ from which our word ‘envy’ is derived, signifies originally, casting a hostile look on some one.

‘I once in Cairo,’ said my friend, ‘conversed on this superstition with an intelligent Cairan, who described it as the great curse of his country.

“Does the mischievous influence of the evil eye,” he was asked, “depend on the will of the person whose glance does the mischief?”

‘Not altogether,’ he answered : ‘an intention to harm may render more virulent the poison of the glance ; but envy, or the desire to appropriate a thing, or even excessive admiration, may render it hurtful, without the consciousness, or even against the will, of the offender. It injures most the thing that it first hits. Hence the bits of red cloth that are stuck about the dresses of women, and about the trappings of camels and horses, and the large spots of lampblack on the foreheads of children. They are a sort of conductors. It is hoped that they will attract the glance, and exhaust its venom.’ A fine house, fine furniture, a fine camel, and fine horse, are all enjoyed with fear and trembling, lest they should excite envy and bring misfortune. A butcher would be afraid to expose fine meat, lest the evil eye of passers-by, who might covet it, should taint it, or make it spoil, or become unwholesome.

Children are supposed to be peculiarly the objects of desire and admiration. When they are suffered to go abroad, they are intentionally dirty and ill-dressed, but generally they are kept at home, without air or exercise, but safe from admiration. This occasions a remarkable difference between the infant mortality in Europe and in Egypt. In Europe, it is the children of the rich that live ; in Egypt, it is the children of the poor. The children of the poor cannot be confined. They live in the fields. As soon as you quit the city, you see in every clover-field a group, of which the centre is a tethered buffalo, and round it are the children of its owner, with their provision of bread and water, sent thither at sunrise, and to remain there till sunset, basking in the sun, and breathing the air from the desert. The Fellah children enter their hovels only to sleep ; and that only in the winter. In summer, the days and nights are passed in the open air ; and notwithstanding their dirt and their bad food, they grow up healthy and vigorous, except when suffering from ophthalmia, as numbers do. The children of the rich, confined by fear of the evil eye, to the harem, are puny creatures, of whom not a fourth part reaches adolescence. Achmet Pasha Jahir, one of the governors of Cairo under Mohammed Ali, had two hundred and eighty children ; only six survived him. Mohammed Ali himself had eighty-seven ; only ten were living at his death. ‘I believe,’

he added, 'that at the bottom of this superstition is an enormous prevalence of envy among the lower Egyptians. You see it in all their fictions. Half of the stories told in the coffee-shops by the professional story-tellers, of which the *Arabian Nights* are a specimen, turn on malevolence—malevolence, not attributed, as it would be in European fiction, to some insult or injury, inflicted by the person who is its object, but to mere envy; envy of wealth, or of the other means of enjoyment, honourably acquired and liberally used.'

I ought not to omit mentioning, while on this subject, that a little son of the present Viceroy is placed under the care of an English nurse, with the express stipulation that she is to have the uncontrolled management of him. Accordingly, he is kept clean and well clad, and runs about in the open air, in defiance of the 'evil eye,' to the great astonishment of every one.

This superstition appears to prevail equally among the Mahometans and the Christians. But each class have also some of their own.

The Coptic Patriarch, in a conversation at which my informant was present, complained that his people who were pressed for recruits to the army, were often compelled by their comrades to become Mussulmans against their will, by forcing flesh-meat down their throats on a fast-day. They believed, he said, that this compulsory defilement cut them off finally from the Christian Church; and that they might as well become Mussulmans at once. Why does not your Holiness, it was asked, grant a dispensation for such cases? He answered that he did; but that his people often refused to avail themselves of it. And he mentioned an instance of a sick woman whom the physician had ordered to take nourishing food, as essential to her recovery. The Patriarch permitted and enjoined her to do so; but she persisted in fasting, and died.

It is curious to observe the coincidence between the superstition of these poor people and that of the Hindus, who believe that a man who has a piece of beef forced down his throat, or who is tricked into tasting it, loses caste irretrievably. And the Indian mutineers sedulously spread the false report that the British had a design thus to deprive them of their religion with-

out their own consent. It does not appear that they had any dread of the *missionaries* ; because every one is at liberty to listen to them or not, at his own choice. But it certainly would be *possible* for a *Government*—though no British Government would ever have such a thought—to *make* Hindus lose caste (as Tippoo Sahib is said to have done in some instances), without their own consent. That a similar notion should prevail among any denomination of Christians with regard to *their* religion, is what few would have anticipated. If those poor people had been rightly instructed from their childhood, they would have learned, that, though compliance, when practicable, with the rules of their Church in matters originally indifferent, is a duty, ‘the kingdom of heaven,’ as Paul tells the Romans, ‘is not meat and drink but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.’

But the Coptic, in which the Scriptures are read to the people is, as I have already mentioned, a dead language, understood by few, if any, of the laity, and very imperfectly, it is said, by many of the clergy.

Among the Mussulmans, one of the most hurtful superstitions is the Mahometan doctrine of *fatalism*. I say the ‘*Mahometan doctrine*,’ because this differs from the complete, consistent fatalism which teaches that *all* things are alike fated, the *means* as well as the ends, and which, therefore, does not necessarily exercise any influence on the conduct. It is told of the famous Roman stoic, Cato, that one of his slaves, who was about to be punished for stealing, endeavoured to shelter himself under the stoical doctrine of fatalism, saying that he was fated to be a thief ; ‘and to be flogged,’ replied his master. One who believes that the husbandman who is fated to *reap* must have been fated to *sow*, and that he whose destiny is to be idle is destined to starve ; who holds that if he is predestined to commit a murder, he is fated to be hanged for it ; such a one may be in his conduct uninfluenced by his speculative belief. But Mahomet taught a fatalism independent of human actions. Those who had fallen in a certain battle, he did not describe as predestined to *go* to the battle ; but taught that if they had *stayed at home*, they would have dropped down dead at the very same time.

Now it is true indeed that this doctrine is one which no one

does, or can, carry out in practice *thoroughly* and constantly. No one doing so could live a week ; for he would not move out of the way of an advancing carriage, or sea-tide, but would say, if I am destined to be crushed or drowned, nothing can save me ; and if I am fated to escape, nothing can destroy me. But though no one *constantly* acts on such a principle, many of the Mussulmans do act on it very frequently, when it affords a plea for their habitual indolence and carelessness, or for following any inclination. It is well known how difficult it is to induce them to take the most obvious precautions against infectious diseases and epidemics. And, it was remarked to my informant, in reference to the capture of the important town of Kars, which might easily have been saved if prompt supplies had been sent to it, that the Mussulman plea for the gross neglect shown, probably was, ‘if Allah wills that Kars shall be taken, nothing we can do will save it, and if it is his decree that it shall stand, it will stand without our exertions.’ And he added instances of persons who when a crime was proved against them, calmly replied that it was the ‘will of Allah.’

A population, such as that of Egypt at the present day, sunk in the ignorance and superstitions that prevail, could not be at once raised into civilization and prosperity, even by the most just and benevolent and enlightened government.

But there is some hope that increased intercourse with Europeans, caused by the transit line to India, may in time benefit both the rulers and the people, and gradually cause some rays of light to penetrate the gloom, and to dispel some of the intellectual and moral darkness—even ‘a darkness that may be felt’—which overspreads the land, like that literal darkness in the days of Moses.

And no doubt such an effect *would* be produced in no long time, and indeed would have been perceptibly produced before now, if the Europeans in Egypt were much more like what Christians ought to be, than, unhappily a large portion of them are. Their vices, and their manifest carelessness about their own religion, constitute one of the greatest hindrances to the improvement of Egypt. Of all the European Christians resident

in that country, the Italians, and still more, the Greeks, are said to bear the worst character. But I grieve to say that not a few of our own countrymen have a heavy share in this awful responsibility. And far worse is the professed Christian who, either in Egypt, or here, is leading an unchristian life—far worse, both in himself, and in the effects of his example on others, than the unenlightened Egyptian or Turk. Worse in himself, because he has had, and has abused greater advantages ; and ‘of him to whom much is given, much will be required ;’ and more hurtful to others, because it is Gospel truth that his conduct tends to bring into disrepute ; even as Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, reproaches some of his countrymen with causing ‘the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles.’

One important advantage to ourselves may be derived, I think, from the contemplation—painful as it is to a generous mind—of such a government as that of Egypt and some other countries. It may lead us to prize as we ought, with contented thankfulness, the blessings of our own Constitution. By ‘content,’ I do not mean that we should abstain from seeking by legitimate means a remedy for any defects we may observe, and aim at no improvements in any department of Government. Indeed, it is one of our chief blessings, and the glory of our constitution, that *legitimate* means *are* within our reach ; that the nation *can* make known its complaints, or wants or wishes, in a better mode than by insurrection or assassination. But I mean that we should not murmur at not having reached a perfection beyond what can reasonably be looked for in any human institution ; that we should not complain of *imaginary* grievances, nor exaggerate *real* ones ; nor seek to subvert all that is established, because we do not find the earth converted into a Paradise.

If, on the one hand, our Government, with all its faults either in theory, or in the administration of it, be, as some are disposed to think, the best on the whole, or one of the best, that exists, or ever did exist, that is no reason why we should not seek by lawful means to render it still better. And, on the other hand, its falling short of complete perfection, is no reason why we should ungratefully shut our eyes to the benefits we do pos-

sess, and which so many other nations want. To regard indeed with proud and exulting scorn, and hard-hearted self-congratulation, the inferiority, the defects, and the misfortunes of others, this would, no doubt, be most ungenerous. But to dwell with eagerness, with triumphant invective, and with scornful and light-hearted ridicule, on the defects, real or fictitious, of our own constitution, this shows (to say the least) a very unamiable levity of character, and tends to no good result.

I am alluding particularly to the tendency of some modern writers, such as are noticed in an able article in the *Edinburgh Review* for last July ; writers who, with much wit and power of description, find amusement for themselves and their readers in the keen pursuit and exposure of everything faulty, or which can be represented as faulty, in every portion of our whole system ; exaggerating with eager delight every evil they can find, and fixing on it like a raven pouncing on a piece of carrion ; inventing such as do not exist, and keeping out of sight whatever is well done and unexceptionable.

The general drift of such publications is to lead to the conclusion, that with all our boasted institutions and precautions, we are the worst governed people upon earth ; that all our pretensions to justice or wisdom are a mere delusion ; and that our Law-courts, and Parliaments, and Public Offices of every description, are merely a cumbrous machinery for deceiving, and plundering, and oppressing the people.

I am not speaking now of an occasional bitter sarcasm such as may be allowably thrown out in the course of an argumentative work designed to call serious attention to some *particular* abuse, or imminent danger, but of what are avowedly works of amusement, and the *main staple* of which is to hold up all our institutions to ridicule mixed with abhorrence, in a sort of moral pillory.

If a work of this character were put in the way of an Oriental despot (and, for aught I know, this may have actually been done), he would be not unlikely to say—‘ Since it appears, by your own showing, that, with all the troublesome machinery of judges and juries, Lords and Commons, long pleadings, and long debates, you are utterly misgoverned, and all your public men,

appointed with so many forms and so much care, are continually contriving how to repress merit, and to leave business undone, your best course will be to sweep away all these things as useless incumbrances, and establish an absolute monarchy like mine. With less trouble, matters *might* go on better, and evidently could not, by your own account, go on worse.' And he might add—'One advantage you would certainly gain at once; such a writer as this I have been now reading, if he should presume to write in a similar tone about the new Government, would at once lose his head.' For, during a late Viceroyalty of Egypt, several headless trunks were at one time exhibited in Cairo; each with a label on his breast, declaring that they had made too free use of their tongues. It had been strictly forbidden to *talk about* the war then going on in Syria; and these men had been guilty of telling or of asking news.

Much greater licence is used in *this* country, wretchedly enslaved as it is represented to be. The writers I have alluded to give us to understand that the business of the country is done very slowly and very ill; that inventors and projectors of improvements are always treated with insolent neglect; that the Government is conducted by, and for, a few aristocratic families, whose whole public life is a constant career of personal jobs; and that judges, ministers of state, and all other officials, are in a conspiracy to defeat justice, and to shelter cruel oppressors. These are rather serious charges, which are much less true in this country, where they are freely circulated, than in several other countries where—*because* they are true, it would not be safe to publish them.

But these writers, many will say, and doubtless with truth, do not mean all, or half, of what they set forth. They only dress up their tales with exaggeration, to give them a piquancy for the entertainment of their readers; they heighten their descriptions to display their eloquence, either in the tragic or the comic vein. It is 'the fool,' according to Solomon, that 'scattereth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, am I not in sport?'

The direct and immediate tendency of such representations is towards revolution—such a revolution as is aimed at by that small number of persons who call themselves Chartists, or Chris-

tian Socialists. But it is probable that though such be the direct tendency of their representations, the practical effect on the minds of the greater part of the Public, is to render them incredulous as to real and remediable defects, and indifferent about really needful reforms. They understand that these over-wrought representations are merely for dramatic *effect*—that the whole is but a joke—a piece of waggery designed for present entertainment, and that there is nothing in the whole subject calling for any serious attention ; but that when we have closed the book, we have only to awake as it were from a lively dream, and go about our business with a happy conviction that the whole is unreal.

To one of these writers it would be a fair retribution, and might supply a useful lesson, that he should be visited, himself, with a horrible dream. I would wish him to dream that he was a peasant under an Oriental despotism. Let him dream that he was taxed at the arbitrary will of the sovereign, and that he had to pay his taxes in kind, his produce being valued at about half the market price. Let him next dream that a great part of his land was taken from him, he receiving in return a rent of so many piastres ; and the piastre being afterwards reduced to one-fourth of its original value, the nominal payment remaining the same. Let him dream that he was pressed to labour, under the lash, on some public work, at low wages, of which four-fifths were paid in food, consisting of hard, sour biscuit. Next, let him dream, that having been robbed or defrauded by a Turk, and going to a magistrate for redress, whom he was obliged to bribe to hear his cause, he found that, after all, his opponent had bribed higher ; and that besides losing his cause, he was bastinadoed till he had confessed that he had brought a false charge. Then let him dream that he saw his grown-up son, on whom he had relied for the future support of the family, dragged off in chains as a conscript soldier. And lastly, let him dream that this son having deserted, and been concealed by him, both received sentence of death. On awaking, he would be inclined to doubt whether ours really is the worst possible government.

And as for those who, in Ireland, post up placards, denouncing as oppressive and persecuting every Government that

does not allow them to oppress and persecute others, and calling on all Irishmen to follow the example of the brave Sepoys—those brave Sepoys who show their valour by torturing and murdering helpless women and children, but in the battle-field are always routed by a fourth part of their number of our gallant countrymen—as for those who exhort Irishmen to follow that example, by slaughtering man, woman, and child of the Saxon race, I would wish one of them to dream that he was under the rule of a Hindu Prince, to whom he had submitted on a promise of safety and protection, and who proceeded to fulfil his promise in Oriental style, by wreaking his vengeance on him for being, though not a Saxon, at least an European, and (most unfairly) for being a Christian; unfairly, I say, since in everything but the name, he is most emphatically *un*-Christian. Let him dream that he sees his wife and daughters outraged, mutilated, and tortured to death, and his infants dashed on the pavement, while he himself is being gradually and slowly hacked to pieces by ferocious barbarians, one degree, though only one degree, less detestable than himself, inasmuch as they were brought up heathens, and do not call themselves Christians.

And when he awoke, he would probably exclaim with joy, ‘Thank God, it was but a dream! Thank God, I am under a British sovereign!’

THE END.

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A LECTURE

DELIVERED BY

RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

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DR. PALEY'S WORKS.

TO give anything like a complete review of the Works of Dr. Paley, would far exceed the limits of a single Lecture, or even of two or three. But a few remarks on some of the most important matters he has treated of, and on the manner in which he has handled them, will, it is hoped (considering how important those matters are, and how great his celebrity as an Author), be neither uninteresting nor uninformative.

The very circumstance however of his being so well-known an Author may perhaps be thought by some to make any notice of his Works superfluous. But in truth, though these Works are much read in comparison of those of most other writers, they are less read—considering the *popular* character of most of them—than they deserve to be. For one person that is well acquainted with them, there are probably five—and those perfectly qualified to understand and to profit by the perusal—who know little or nothing of them except at second-hand, and by report.

On the other hand, it is far from superfluous to point out some of the errors that are to be found in some of the Works of this eminent man, and especially in that one—his *Moral Philosophy*—which is in use as a University text-book.

That Work, and his *Christian Evidences* (including the *Horæ Paulinæ*), his *Natural Theology*, and his *Sermons* and *Charges*, are the whole of his publications. They are all characterized by a remarkably clear and forcible style, very simple, with an air of earnestness, generally devoid of ornament, and often homely; but occasionally rising into a manly and powerful eloquence.

His style is a striking contrast to that of a kind of writers, who, in our day, are regarded by some with great admiration; Writers who affect a sort of mystical, dim, half-intelligible kind of sublimity; and who, from their grandiloquent obscurity, are supposed to be very *profound*; just as muddy water is sometimes taken for deep, because one cannot see to the bottom of it.

Of this class of Writers, whom the late Bishop Copleston used to call "the Magic-Lantern School," Paley is the very opposite. And whenever anything that is at all of the character of eloquence does appear in him, it is doubly striking from its standing in such a strong relief, as it were, in the midst of what is so remarkably plain and unadorned. It is like a gleam of bright sunshine breaking out from a generally clouded sky.

The concluding passage of the *Horæ Paulinæ* affords a striking example of the effect thus produced. The general style of the work is business-like, simple and unpretending to the greatest degree. But the winding up of the argument at the conclusion is in a kind of unstudied eloquence which reminds one of a lightning flash from a dark cloud. This work is, as probably most of you are aware, an examination of the Apostle Paul's Epistles along with the Acts of the Apostles, in order to show, by internal evidence alone, that they

must both be genuine Works. He discovers a vast number of points of coincidence between them, so minute, and evidently undesigned, that it is totally impossible they could ever have found their way either into a forgery, or a compilation made up in after-ages from floating traditions. And this is done so ably and so satisfactorily, that I have often recommended the study of this work to *legal* students; not merely on account of its intrinsic value, with a view to its own immediate object, but also as an admirable exercise in the art of sifting evidence.

That *minuteness* in the points of coincidence which I have alluded to, and which Paley so earnestly dwells on, is just the circumstance which, in a question of evidence, makes their importance the greater. The unthinking are apt to overlook this, and to conclude that what is itself a very small and trifling circumstance, is small and unimportant as a proof. But the most important evidence is often furnished by things the most insignificant in themselves. The impression of the sole of a Man's Shoe, or a scrap of paper used as Wadding for a gun, have led to the detection of crimes. And in reality it is altogether in minute points that the difference is to be perceived between truth and fabrication. A false story may easily be made plausible in its general outline;—in the great features of the transactions related. But in some very minute particulars, which would escape notice except on a very close examination, there will almost always be found some inconsistencies, such as, of course, could not exist in a true narrative.

The difference in this respect, between truth and fabrication, answers to that between the productions

of Nature and the works of Art Both may appear equally perfect at a slight glance, or even on close inspection by the naked eye. But apply a microscope to each, and you will see the difference. A piece of delicate cambric, under the Solar Microscope, looks like a coarse sail-cloth; and an artificial flower, which might deceive the naked eye even of a florist, will appear rugged and uneven; while the petals of a real flower, or the wing of a fly, when thus examined, exhibit such delicate and perfect and beautiful regularity, that ‘even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.’ And so it is when we apply the Microscope of close and minute investigation to genuine compositions and true history.

Paley, then, having by the application of his Microscope fully established the genuineness of these Works, proceeds in conclusion, to state very briefly the inference which inevitably follows, considering what the matter of them is, and *to* whom written, and *by* whom, and when.

‘Here then,’ he says, ‘we have a man of liberal attainments, and in other points, of sound judgment, who had addicted his life to the service of the Gospel. We see him, in the prosecution of his purpose, travelling from country to country, enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extremity of danger, assaulted by the populace, punished by the magistrates, scourged, beat, stoned, left for dead; expecting, wherever he came, a renewal of the same treatment and the same dangers; yet, when driven from one city, preaching in the next; spending his whole time in the employment, sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, his safety; persisting in this course

to old age, unaltered by the experience of perverseness, ingratitude, prejudice, desertion; unsubdued by anxiety, want, labour, persecutions; unwearied by long confinement, undismayed by the prospect of death. Such was St. Paul. We have his letters in our hands: we have also a history purporting to be written by one of his fellow-travellers, and appearing, by a comparison with these letters, certainly to have been written by some person well acquainted with the transactions of his life. From the letters, as well as from the history, we gather not only the account which we have stated of *him*, but that he was one out of many who acted and suffered in the same manner; and that, of those who did so, several had been the companions of Christ's Ministry, the ocular witnesses, or pretending to be such, of his Miracles, and of his resurrection. We moreover find this same person referring in his letters to his supernatural conversion, the particulars and accompanying circumstances of which are related in the history, and which accompanying circumstances, if all or any of them be true, render it impossible to have been a delusion. We also find him positively and in appropriated terms, asserting that he himself worked Miracles, strictly and properly so called, in support of the Mission which he executed; the history, meanwhile, recording various passages of his Ministry, which come up to the extent of this assertion. The question is, whether falsehood was ever attested by evidence like this. Falsehoods, we know, have found their way into reports, into tradition, into books: but is an example to be met with, of a man voluntarily undertaking a life of want and pain, of incessant fatigue, of continual peril; submitting to the loss of his home

and country, to stripes and stoning, to tedious imprisonment, and the constant expectation of a violent death, for the sake of carrying about a story of what was false, and of what, if false, he must have known to be so?'

Very eloquent again, though much too long for citation, is the concluding chapter of the *Natural Theology*.

And now compare a passage of such clear, homely, forcible simplicity as this, with the bombastic obscurity of such Writers as it is now the fashion, with some persons, to admire as full of transcendental wisdom and eloquence; and say which is the more likely to be approved by those of solid good sense, and pure taste; and which, by those of an opposite character.*

Here is a specimen, to which as many more might be added as would fill a volume:—

"It [Religion] is a mountain air; it is the embalmer of the world. It is myrrh, and storax, and chlorine, and rosemary. It makes the sky and the hills sublime; and the silent song of the stars is it. . . . Always the seer is the sayer. Somehow his dream is told, somehow he publishes it with solemn joy, some-

* Tradition is "a vast system, not to be comprised in a few sentences, not to be embodied in one code or treatise, but consisting of a certain body of truth, permeating the Church like an atmosphere, irregular in its shape from its very profusion and exuberance; . . . at times melting away into legend and fable; partly written, partly unwritten, partly the interpretation, partly the supplement of Scripture, partly preserved in *intellectual expressions*, partly latent in the spirit and temper of Christians; *poured to and fro in closets and upon the housetops*, in liturgies, in controversial works, in obscure fragments, in sermons."—Newman's *Lectures on the Church*, p. 298.

times with pencil on canvas, sometimes with chisel on stone; sometimes in towers and aisles of granite, his soul's worship is builded. . . . Man is the Wonder Maker. He is seen amid miracles. The stationariness of religion, the assumption that the age of inspiration is past, that the Bible is closed; the fear of degrading the character of Jesus by representing Him as a Man, indicate with sufficient clearness, the falsehood of our theology. It is the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was—that He speaketh, not spoke. The true Christianity—a faith like Christ's in the infinitude of Man—is lost. None believeth in the soul of Man, but only in some man or person old and departed! In how many churches, and by how many prophets, tell me, is Man made sensible that he is an infinite soul; that the earth and heavens are passing into his mind; and that he is drinking for ever the soul of God! The very word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is a monster; it is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain. . . . Man's life is a miracle, and all that Man doth. . . . A true conversion, a true Christ, is now, as always, to be made by the reception of beautiful sentiments. The gift of God to the soul is not a vaunting, overpowering, excluding sanctity, but a sweet natural goodness like thine and mine, and that thus invites thine and mine to be, and to grow."

"If thou hast any tidings," says Falstaff to Pistol, "prithee deliver them like a man of this world."

It is worth observing that this Writer (as well as several others of these "Children of the Mist") professes to be a *Christian*. They believe in Christianity,

all but the history and the doctrines. The history they consider as partly true, but partly a Myth, and partly an exaggerated and falsified report; and the doctrines as a mixture of truth with errors and pious frauds. Yet though in reality much further removed from Christianity than a Jew or a Mahometan, they are quite ready to take that oath, “on the true faith of a Christian,” which many have regarded as the great bulwark of the christian character of our Legislature! And you should observe that, with hypocrisy (against which, it has been most truly remarked, no legal enactments can afford security) these persons are not at all chargeable. They are to be censured indeed for an unwarrantable use of the *terms* they employ;—for inventing a new language of their own, and calling it English. But since they tell us what it is they do mean by Christianity they cannot fairly be accused of *deceit*.

I am told that the school or sect to which most of these Writers belong is called “*Positivity*,” and that its doctrine is the worship of *Human Nature*. If you have no clear notion concerning this system, you are, probably, so far, on a level with its authors.

Paley’s *Horæ Paulinæ* was, I understand, considered by himself as his Masterpiece. And in that judgment I concur. In his other Works, much of the valuable matter they contain is extracted in a condensed form from other authors; so that his chief praise—no slight one however—is that of an able *compiler*. But the *Horæ Paulinæ* is emphatically an original Work, and one which exhibits in a most striking manner his peculiar acuteness in sifting evidence.

It is not unlikely that this work has had the effect,

among others, of inciting subsequent Writers to enter on the task of investigating internal evidences ; while it has furnished them with an admirable example of the way in which the process is to be conducted.

A most interesting Work which has appeared but a few years ago, Smith's *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, reminds one of Paley's volume, which perhaps may in some degree have suggested it.

And the same may be said of Graves's *Lectures on the Pentateuch*.

Paley's longer Work on the Evidences is in a great measure compiled from Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel*, exhibiting the main part of his arguments in a more compressed, and at the same time more popular form. A still more brief, and still more popular compendium, however, seemed yet wanting ; and accordingly a little Tract, which most of you probably are acquainted with, was drawn up a few years ago, containing the substance of most of Paley's arguments with the addition of some others.

To that Tract, and to Paley's *Evidences*, and to his *Horæ Paulinæ*, and to Leslie's and Lardner's Works on the same subject, no answer, as far as I know and believe, has ever been brought forward. The opponents of Christianity always chuse their own position ; and the position they chuse is always that of the assailant. They bring forward objections ; but never attempt to defend themselves against the objections to which they are exposed.

The cause of this it is easy to perceive. Objections—not only plausible, but real, valid, and sometimes unanswerable objections—may be brought against what is nevertheless true, and capable of being fully established by a preponderance of probability ;—by showing

that there are more and weightier objections on the opposite side. If therefore any one can induce you to attend to the objections on one side only, wholly overlooking the (perhaps weightier) opposite ones, he may easily gain an apparent triumph. A barrister would have an easy task if he were allowed to bring forward all that could be said against the party he was opposed to, and to pass over in silence all that could be urged on the other side as not worth answering.

And many of the best-established and universally admitted historical facts, might in this way be assailed, by showing that they are in many respects very improbable. The history, for instance, of Napoleon Buonaparte has been shown to contain a much greater amount of gross and glaring improbabilities than any equal portion of Scripture-history ; or perhaps even than all the Scripture Narratives together. And yet all believe it ; because the improbability of its being an entire fabrication is incalculably greater.

Again, the far greater portion of the human race have never seen the Ocean ; and they believe in its existence on the testimony—at second or third hand—of others. Now this is a thing which, according to Hume, they ought not to believe on any testimony, because it is at variance with their experience. Not only have they never seen any such thing, but they *have* had experience of ponds and rivers, all, of *fresh* Water ; while they are told that the sea is *salt* ; and this, though the *fresh* rivers, and fresh rain, are said to fall into it. Moreover they are told that it abounds in *fish* ; and they *have* had experience of fish living in fresh Water, but none of their living in brine. And if they tried the experiment of putting some river fish

into brine, and found that it killed them, they might say that they now knew by experience the falsity of what they had been told respecting the Ocean, in addition to their general experience of men's telling false tales.

To prove that there is nothing *improbable* in the existence of a salt ocean covering above three-fourths of the Globe, would not be easy. And yet men do believe it, and have good reasons for believing it, even when they have not seen it.

And practically, all reasonable men proceed on the maxim of an ancient Greek author, which is repeatedly cited by Aristotle; that "it is *probable* that many *improbable* things will happen."

Indeed, were it not so, every intelligent and well-informed man would be a *prophet*. By an extensive study of History, and observation of Mankind, he would have learned to judge accurately what kind of events are probable. And if nothing ever happened at variance with probabilities,—if everything was sure to turn out conformably to reasonable expectations (which is just what is always assumed by anti-christian Writers), then, such a person might sit down and write a *prospective history* of the next Century; and do this as easily and as correctly as he could write a history of the last century: even as astronomers can calculate *forwards* the eclipses that are to come, as easily as they can calculate backwards those that are past.

Let those objectors then, who are *merely* objectors, try the experiment of writing a conjectural prophetic history. Their histories, I conceive, would be found a good deal at variance with each other; and all of

them, when the time arrived, at variance with the events.

That most interesting and valuable Work, the *Natural Theology*, it has of late been asserted was chiefly taken from a Dutch Writer, with less acknowledgment than ought to have been made. How the fact stands, I am not competent to decide. But if it be true that Paley is more largely indebted to another Writer than he has himself represented, this may very easily have happened without any designed misrepresentation. When a Work has been long in hand—as was probably the case with this one—the author is not unlikely to forget the source from which he had originally derived some of the facts and of the arguments which had long since become familiar to him, and, as it were, a part of the furniture of his mind. And he may thence occasionally fall into an unconscious plagiarism.

It should be observed however, on the other hand, that there are some critics who have cultivated something of the mental habits of a “detective Policeman,” always on the look-out for stolen goods;—critics who are so anxious to display their acuteness in finding plagiarisms, that if in two authors they meet with the same thought, or anything that can be tortured into a coincidence, they at once infer that the one must have taken it from the other.

In the *Natural Theology* Paley has exceedingly well pointed out numerous instances of evident design in the Universe, and of such wise design as manifestly proves an intelligent Creator. But in what he says of *benevolent* design, and, universally, in all that relates

to the *Moral* attributes of the Deity, he labours under a disadvantage resulting from his peculiar views on the subject of morality. Not that he is to be complained of for not satisfactorily explaining—what no one *can* explain—the existence of evil in the universe. But considering what a mixture of good and evil actually does present itself to our view, it would be impossible for Man, if he really were such a Being as Paley represents him to be, to form those notions of the divine benevolence which Paley himself contends for.

Man, according to him, has no moral faculty,—no power of distinguishing right from wrong,—no preference of justice to injustice, or kindness to cruelty, except when one's own personal interest happens to be concerned. And this he attempts to establish by collecting all the instances that are to be found in various ages and countries, of anomalies in men's moral judgments ; showing that this kind of crime was approved in one country, and that kind in another : that one vice was tolerated in one age, and another in another. And even so, one might collect specimens of anomalies in the human frame ; showing that some persons have been born without arms or without legs ; some, deaf-mutes, some blind, and some idiots. Whence it might be inferred, that Man ought not to be described as a rational Being, or one endowed with the faculty of speech, or having eyes, and hands, and feet. A man then, according to his view, being compelled, by the view of the universe, to admit that God is benevolent, is thence led, from prudential motives alone, to cultivate benevolence in himself, with a view to secure a future reward. The truth, I conceive, is exactly the reverse of this ; viz., that Man having in

himself a Moral-faculty (or taste, as some prefer to call it) by which he is instinctively led to approve virtue and disapprove vice, is thence disposed and inclined antecedently, to attribute to the Creator of the universe,—the most perfect and infinitely highest of Beings,—all those moral (as well as intellectual) qualities which to himself seem the most worthy of admiration, and intrinsically beautiful and excellent. For, to do evil rather than good, appears to all men (except to those who have been very long hardened and depraved by the extreme of wickedness) to imply something of weakness, imperfection, corruption and degradation. I say “*disposed* and inclined,” because our admiration for benevolence, wisdom, &c., would not *alone* be sufficient to make us attribute these to the Deity, if we saw *no* marks of them in the creation; but our finding in the creation many marks of contrivance, and of beneficent contrivance, *together with* the antecedent bias in our own minds, which inclines us to attribute goodness to the Supreme Being—*both these conjointly* lead us to the conclusion that God is infinitely benevolent, notwithstanding the admixture of evil in his works, which we cannot account for. But these appearances of evil *would* stand in the way of such a conclusion, if Man really were, what Dr. Paley represents him, a Being destitute of all moral sentiment, all innate and original admiration of goodness. He would, in that case be more likely to come to the conclusion (as many of the Heathen seem actually to have done) that the Deity was a Being of a mixed or of a capricious nature; an idea which, shocking as it is to every well-constituted mind, would not be so in the least, to

such a mind as Dr. Paley attributes to the whole human species.

To illustrate this argument a little further; suppose a tasteful architect and a rude savage to be both contemplating a magnificent building, unfinished, or partially fallen to ruin; the one, not being at all able to comprehend the complete design, nor having any taste for its beauties if perfectly exhibited, would not attribute any such design to the author of it, but would suppose the prostrate columns and rough stones to be as much designed as those that were erect and perfect; the other would sketch out in his own mind something like the perfect structure of which he beheld only a part; and though he might not be able to explain how it came to be unfinished, or decayed, would conclude that some such design was in the mind of the builder: though this same man, if he were contemplating a mere rude heap of stones which bore *no* marks of design at all, would not in *that* case draw such a conclusion.

Or again, suppose two persons, one having an ear for music, and the other totally destitute of it, were both listening to a piece of music imperfectly heard at a distance, or half drowned by other noises, so that only some notes of it were distinctly caught, and others were totally lost or heard imperfectly; the one might suppose that the sounds he heard were all that were actually produced, and think the whole that met his ear to be exactly such as was designed; but the other would form some notion of a piece of real music, and would conclude that the interruptions and imperfections of it were not parts of the design, but were to

be attributed to his imperfect hearing : though if he heard on another occasion, a mere confusion of sounds without any melody at all, he would not conclude that anything like music was designed.

The application is obvious : the wisdom and goodness discernible in the structure of the universe, but imperfectly discerned, and blended with evil, leads a man who has an innate approbation of those attributes, to assign them to the Author of the universe, though he be unable to explain that admixture of evil ; but if Man were destitute of moral sentiments, the view of the universe, such as it appears to us, would hardly lead him to that conclusion.

When the edition of Archbishop King's discourse appeared (from the Appendix to which the above passage is extracted) a gentleman belonging to a university in which Paley's *Moral Philosophy* is a text-book published a vindication of him from the charge of denying the existence of a Moral-faculty. He sent me, along with a very courteous letter, a copy of his work. I expressed, in answer, my very great surprise that there should exist any difference of opinion, not, as to the *soundness* of Paley's view, but of what it *is* that he does say ; considering how very perspicuous his style is. And I transcribed a short passage from the *Moral Philosophy*, giving a reference to several others ; all to the same purpose. In reply, the writer of the vindication confessed that he had overlooked these passages, which did, he admitted, fully bear out my remarks.

I was indeed well prepared to believe, that (as I said in the opening of this Lecture) many persons hear much, and talk much, of Paley's Works, while they have read little or nothing of them. But that any

one should publish a commentary on a work which he had not read with even moderate attention, overlooking a statement which is no slight incidental remark, but the very basis of the whole system,—this did seem to me very strange.

The passage I cited is the following, from chap. iii. “Let it be asked, Why am I obliged to keep my word? and the answer will be, Because I am urged to do so by a violent motive (namely, the expectation of being, after this life, rewarded if I do, or punished for it, if I do not) resulting from the command of another;—namely, of God. . . . Therefore private happiness is our motive, and the will of God, our rule.”

Here, by the way, it is to be observed that in speaking of *reward*, he contradicts what he had laid down in the preceding chapter; in which he expressly excludes the idea of *reward* from that of *obligation*. “Offer a man,” says he, “a *gratuity* for doing anything, he is not *obliged* by your offer, to do it; though he may be *induced, prevailed upon, tempted*, to do it.”

Again, he says in the same third chapter: “There is always understood to be a difference between an act of *prudence* and an act of *duty*. Thus, if I distrusted a man who owed me a sum of money, I should reckon it an act of prudence to get another person bound with him; but I should hardly call it an act of duty. On the other hand, it would be thought a very unusual and loose kind of language, to say—that as I had made such a promise, it was *prudent* to perform it; or that, as my friend, when he went abroad, placed a box of jewels in my hands, it would be *prudent* in me to preserve it for him till he returned.

“Now in what, you will ask, does the difference con-

sist? inasmuch as, according to our account of the matter, both in the one case and the other,—in acts of duty as well as acts of prudence,—we consider solely what we ourselves shall gain or lose by the act.

“The difference, and the only difference, is this; that, in the one case, we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world; in the other case, we consider also what we shall gain or lose in the world to come.

“They who would establish a system of morality, independent of a future state, must look out for some different idea of moral obligation; unless they can show that virtue conducts the possessor to certain happiness in this life, or to a much greater share of it than he could attain by a different behaviour.”

And the same doctrine is repeatedly and distinctly stated in other places, as the very fundamental principle of the treatise.

When he says that “they who would establish a system of morality independent of a future state, must look out for some different idea of moral obligation,” it is strange it did not occur to him, that, according to him, they never could possibly form *any* idea of it at all. One might as well say, Men see with their eyes, and cannot see any otherwise; and those who have no eyes, must see as well as they can without them.

And equally strange is the qualification he adds,—“Unless they can show that virtue conducts the possessor to certain happiness in *this* life, or to a much greater share of it than he could attain by a different behaviour.” For, by his account, if they *could* show this (and this is what Aristotle and all the ancient heathen moralists do maintain; none of whom make any refe-

rence to a future state of reward and punishment, or appear to have believed in any), then, what is commonly called *virtue* would be merely a branch of *prudence*. For, “the only difference,”—he had just said—“between an act of prudence and an act of duty, depends on our looking to the present world, or to the world to come.” And it is as plain as any axiom of Euclid, that if you take away “*the only difference*” between two things, you leave them exactly alike.

Yet Aristotle and the other ancient writers, did in common with all their countrymen, use terms which we rightly translate by the word “*virtue* ;” and always draw a distinction between that and a mere regard for one’s worldly interest. All which would have been clearly *impossible*, if Paley’s theory were correct. It is refuted not by any alleged *truth* and soundness in their views, but by the very language they employ.

If you could imagine a whole nation labouring under that curious defect of vision which does exist in some few individuals, the total non-perception of *colours*, you might be quite sure that that nation would not have in their language any words signifying red, yellow, blue, and green. And you may be no less sure that a nation which perceived no difference between virtue and self-interest would have no such word as “*virtue*” in their language.

But, in truth, Paley’s distinction between an act of duty and an act of prudence, is one which is not recognised in the expressions or the notions of any class of men in any country ; and amounts (as far as regards the present question) to no distinction at all. Whatever is done wholly and solely from motives of personal expediency,—from calculations of individual loss

or gain—is always accounted a matter of prudence and not of virtue. If you could suppose a man who had no disapprobation whatever of cruelty, injustice, and ingratitude, as things bad in themselves, and who would feel no scruple against committing theft or murder, if he could do so with impunity, but who abstained from such acts purely from fear of suffering for it, whether in this life or the next, just as he would abstain from placing his money in an insecure bank; and if he relieved the distressed, and did services to his neighbours, without any kindly feeling, or any sense of duty, but entirely with a view to his own advantage, hoping to obtain,—suppose,—votes at an election, or some benefit in another world,—just as a grazier feeds his cattle well, that he may make the better profit of them,—we should not, if we thought thus of him, call him a virtuous man, but merely prudent.

Revelation was not bestowed on Mankind to impart to them the first notions of moral good and evil, but to supply sufficient *motives* for right practice, and sufficient *strength* to act on those motives. And accordingly you find in the New Testament that those to whom the Gospel was preached are not addressed as persons having no notion of any difference between right and wrong; but are exhorted to “*add* to their faith, *virtue*, brotherly love, charity,” and to follow after “*whatsoever* things are pure, and lovely, and honest, and of good report.”

And this indeed is distinctly and fully admitted by Paley himself; who says, in the opening of his Treatise, that “the Scriptures pre-suppose in the persons to whom they speak, a knowledge of the prin-

ciples of natural justice ; and are employed, not so much to teach *new* rules of morality, as to enforce the practice of it by new sanctions." It is strange he did not perceive that this admission overthrows his theory of the non-existence of a natural conscience. For, the far greater part of those whom the New Testament Scriptures address had been brought up in Paganism ; a religious system as immoral as it was absurd. They could not therefore have originally derived their "principles of natural justice" from calculations founded on a knowledge of the Divine will ; but must have had (as Paul assures us) "the law written in their hearts ; their conscience also bearing witness."

But the great heathen Moralist, Aristotle, after having given a full and glowing description of what virtue is, and on the whole, not an incorrect one, laments (in the conclusion of his treatise) that so few can be induced in practice to model their life on the principles he has laid down. He is like the fabled Prometheus, who was said to have succeeded in fashioning a well-constructed human *body*, but found it a cold and lifeless corpse, till he had ascended up to heaven, to bring down celestial fire to animate the frame. And thus it is that the writings of this, and of other Heathen Moral Philosophers furnish a strong confirmation of the divine origin of our religion ; since it is morally impossible, humanly speaking, that ignorant Galilæan peasants and fishermen could have written in a moral tone partly coinciding with, and partly surpassing, that of the most learned Philosophers of Greece.

To discuss as fully as it deserves the interesting and important subject now before us, would, of course, far

exceed the limits of this Lecture. But those who do feel an interest in it, may be referred to works that are quite accessible, and not at all too abstruse for ordinary readers. Some of you probably are acquainted with a little elementary book of *Lessons on Morals*, of which the greater part appeared first in the periodical called the *Leisure Hour*, and in which the points I have now slightly touched on are treated of more fully. And there is an edition of selections from Aristotle's *Moral Philosophy*, for the use of the students of Trinity College, Dublin, which I have been accustomed to recommend even to readers who understand nothing of Greek, for the sake of a dissertation, of considerable length, in English, and in very plain English, which is prefixed, and which I consider to be well worth the price of the whole book.

At present, I will only add, before quitting the subject, a brief remark on the curious circumstance that Paley's doctrine of the total absence, in Man, of any Moral Faculty, is strenuously maintained by a large class of persons the most opposed to him as a theologian, and who regard his opinions on religion as utterly unsound.*

The cause of this their adherence to Paley's theory I conceive to be a well-intentioned but misdirected desire to exalt God's glory, and set forth Man's sinful-

* M. Napoleon Roussel is one out of many of these. He has published a number of little tracts, all ingenious, and most of them sound and edifying. But in one of them—"The Believing Infidel" (*L'Incredule Croyant*) he strongly advocates (though not more so than many other divines of a very influential school) the views I have been alluding to.

ness, without perceiving that they are in fact doing away with both the one and the other.

If Man be naturally destitute of any faculty that distinguishes right and wrong,—any notion of such a thing as Duty—then, no one can be accounted sinful, any more than a brute beast, or a born idiot. These do many things that are odious and mischievous, and that *would* be sin in a rational Being; but the term *sin* we never apply to their acts (any more than the term *folly*) precisely because they lack a Moral-faculty and a rational nature;—because not having a conscience, they cannot violate the dictates of conscience. Indeed, an idiot is accordingly called, in some parts of the country, an “innocent,” on the very ground of his having this deficiency, which Paley and his followers attribute to all mankind. And a revelation of the divine commands to a Being destitute of the Moral-faculty, though it might deter him from certain acts through fear of punishment, as brutes, we all know, may be so influenced, would leave him still remaining (as they are) a stranger to any notion of such a thing as Duty. He would be no more a moral agent than a dog or a horse.*

And to speak to such a Being of the *moral* attributes of the Deity, would be like speaking of colours to a blind-born man. If he attaches no meaning to the words “good,” and “just,” and “right,” except that such is the divine command, then, to say that God is good, and his commands just, is only saying in a circuitous way, that He is what He is, and that what

* Rom. i. ii.

He wills He wills ; which might equally be said of any Being in the universe. Indeed, this is what Paley himself perceives and distinctly admits. [Chap. ix.] He admits that we attribute goodness to the Most High, on account of the conformity of his acts to the principles which we are accustomed to call "good;" and that these principles are called "good" solely from their conformity to the Divine will. It is very strange that when he did perceive that he was thus proceeding in a circle, this did not open his eyes to the erroneousness of the principle which had led him into it.

And any one would be equally involved in a vicious circle, who, while he held Paley's theory, should refer to the pure and elevated moral tone of the New Testament as an internal evidence (and in reality it is a very strong one) to prove that it could not be the unaided work of ignorant, half-crazy Jewish peasants and fishermen. For, if all our moral notions are entirely derived from that book, to say that the morality of the book is correct, is merely to say that it is what it is. We should be arguing like the Mahometans, who infer the inspiration of the Koran from the excellence of its style; they having made the Koran their sole *standard* of style, and reckoning every work to be the better or the worse Arabic, in proportion as it approaches more or less to the language of the Koran.

But what tends to keep up this confusion of thought in some men's minds is this; we do conclude in this or that *particular instance*, that so and so is wise and good, though we do not perceive its wisdom and goodness, but found our conviction solely on its being the

Divine will. But then, this is from our *general* conviction that God *is* wise and good ; not from our attaching no meaning to the words wise and good, except the Divine will. Then, and then only, can the command of a Superior *make* anything a duty, when we set out with the conviction that it is a *duty* to obey him. It is just so, accordingly, that we judge even in what relates to our fellow-men. If some measure were proposed by any friend whom you knew from his past conduct to be a very able and upright man, you would presume, even before you knew any particulars of that measure, that it must be a wise and good one. This would be a natural and a fair mode of judging of the unknown from the known. And you would think a person very absurd who should thereupon conclude that you had no notion at all of what *is* a wise and good measure, and meant nothing by those words except that it is what proceeds from that friend of yours. And so it is in many other cases. You have read (suppose) several works of a certain author, and have found them all highly interesting and instructive. If, then, you hear of his bringing out a new work, you expect, before you have seen it, that it will be a valuable one. But this is not from your meaning by a “valuable work” nothing at all but that it comes from his pen, but from your reasoning—very justly—from the known to the unknown.

To infer that because this *or* that *particular book*, or measure, or rule of conduct, may be presumed to be good, solely on account of the person it proceeds from, therefore the same may be the case with *all* of them *collectively*, would be a gross fallacy, (what in logical language is called the “fallacy of *composition*,”) and

one which, in such instances as those just given, would be readily detected.

A right-minded Christian then will say, "I am sure so and so is right, though I do not understand why or how it is; but such is the command of my heavenly Father; and I do understand that I have good grounds for trusting in Him." And such a man will keep clear of the presumption, calling itself humility, of those who insist on it that in such and such instances the Almighty *had* no reason at all for what He has done, except (as they express it) to "declare his sovereignty;" and that He acted only "for his own glory;" as if He could literally seek glory! Whenever the Most High has merely revealed to us his will, we must not dare to pronounce that He *had* no reasons for it except his will, because He has not thought fit to make those reasons known to us. To say (as some have presumed to say *) that He does so and so for *no cause whatever except that He chuses it*, seems little, if at all, short of blasphemy. Even an earthly king, being not responsible to any of his subjects for the reasons of his commands, may sometimes think fit to issue commands without explaining his reasons. And it would be insolent rashness for any one thence to conclude that he *had* no reasons, but acted from mere caprice.

So also, a dutiful child will often have to say, "I do so and so because my kind and wise parents have commanded me: *that* is reason enough for *me*." But though this is—to the child—a very good reason for *obeying* the command, it would be a very bad reason,

* See *Lessons on Morals*, Less. xviii. § 4, note.

with the *parents*, for *giving* that command. And he would show his filial veneration, and trust, not by taking for granted that his parents *had no* reason for their commands, but, on the contrary, by taking for granted that there *was* a good reason both for their acting as they did, and for their withholding from him any explanation.

Paley's theory is derived (as he informs us), in great measure, from Tucker's *Light of Nature* : a work of great originality, and containing much curious and valuable matter, mixed up with much that is not at all deserving of approbation. It is a book which I have been accustomed to compare to a gold-mine, containing many particles, and some considerable masses, of very precious metal, confusedly intermingled with much gravel and clay.' I cannot think Paley was happy in his choice of the portion he has selected. He would have found a much safer guide in the celebrated Bishop Butler. The denial however of a Moral-faculty was no new device of Tucker's ; being substantially what was maintained by the infidel Hobbes in his once-celebrated work the *Leviathan*. And it was so far from being new, then, that it is noticed by Aristotle as having been maintained in *his* time.

It is to be observed however that Paley's fault as a Moralist is chiefly one of *omission*. I mean, that much of what he says is truth, though far short of the whole truth ; and that he arrives at many right conclusions, though based on insufficient grounds. It is true, for instance, that we are *commanded* to do what is right, and forbidden to do what is wrong ; though it is not true that this is the only meaning of the

words "right" and "wrong." And it is true that God *will* reward and punish; though it is not true that a calculation of reward and punishment constitutes the whole notion of Duty.

Accordingly, faulty as is the basis of Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, there is much to approve in the superstructure. On points of detail, that is, he is generally correct, and often highly instructive.

Some errors, however, there are in his practical rules. And one of them I will notice, because I am not aware of any one's having hitherto pointed it out. In enumerating the cases in which promises are not binding, he speaks of its being quite evident that a promise is not binding when the performance is *impossible*. And yet daily experience shows that this rule does *not* hold good, except when it is distinctly stated or fully understood by both parties, that the promise is to have this limitation; that is, where you prudently insert the condition of "if possible," or "I will do my utmost." But without this, any one who makes an engagement is supposed to have fully considered all possibilities; and if he fails, from whatever cause, he is held bound to make good the damage, or to suffer the blame and penalty of non-fulfilment. If for instance, a merchant or manufacturer contracts to deliver certain goods on such a day, he is never allowed to plead that the non-arrival of an expected ship, or a strike of his workmen, rendered the fulfilment impossible. In fact no such plea is ever put in; because it is known that it would not be listened to. Every court of justice would sentence him to pay damages just the same as if the failure had been caused by negligence. And if the other party chuses, out of compassion for an un-

avoidable and unexpected mischance, to forego the claim, this is a matter of *charity*, but not a claim of right. If in short, you engage merely to *do, what you can* to effect a certain object, you are bound to use your best endeavours, and you are not bound to succeed, nor are liable to any blame for unavoidable failure. But an unconditional promise claims an unconditional fulfilment; and if it is not fulfilled, the other party has a right to complain, and may claim any compensation that can be obtained.

Again, there is a most objectionable doctrine maintained (which, however, was the prevailing one till of late years) in the second volume, that on *Political Philosophy*. He teaches that the direct encouragement of population is the "object which in all countries ought to be aimed at, in preference to every other political purpose whatever." And this is to be done by inducing the mass of the people to content themselves with the lowest description of food, clothing, and dwellings that are compatible with a bare subsistence. The result is, such a condition as that of the chief portion of the population in many parts of India, and in some of the worst districts of Ireland a few years ago. Indeed India and Ireland are the very countries Paley refers to with approbation. You have a swarming population, very poor, debased, and leading a life approaching that of savages. This is the state of things in ordinary seasons. But when there comes a failure in the rice-crop or the potato-crop, the people having nothing to fall back upon, perish by myriads from famine and its attendant diseases.

It must be remembered, however, in Paley's favour, that the above doctrine was nearly universal, up to

the time when Malthus wrote. And even now, persons may be found among what are called "the educated classes," who decry that eminent and most valuable writer. They do not indeed disprove his facts, or answer his arguments. In truth, one might as well talk of answering Euclid. But they misrepresent him; which is easily done to those who judge of a book merely from hearsay. And they *allude* to him as an author long since so thoroughly refuted and exploded as not to be worth notice: which is what may easily be *said*,—though not always so easily *proved*,—of anything whatever.

But Paley, as I have said, is only maintaining the erroneous notions, which, up to his time, had never received, as they have since, a clear refutation.

One other portion of this work of Paley's I shall briefly advert to, without entering on any discussion of the subject-matter of it, but merely in confirmation of my remark in the outset, that his Works are much more talked of than studied.

In chap. vi., Book V., he treats of "Sabbatical institutions"—the Jewish Sabbath, and the Lord's Day. And when (a good many years after) the same doctrine, in substance, with his, was put forth by another author, it was decried, not merely as erroneous, but as an unheard-of *novelty*. Not merely many of the illiterate, but several also who were supposed to be learned Divines, spoke of it (and that in published works) as something that had never before occurred to any Christian writer. Now it was indeed no novelty in Paley's time; his view being what was almost universal throughout Christendom for the first fifteen centuries and more; and had been set forth by Calvin and

others of the most eminent Reformers. But it is not perhaps very strange that persons of no extensive reading, should have been ignorant of *ancient* books, some of them in Latin. But Paley's work had been for half a century a text-book in a great university. And that any writer on these subjects should either be himself ignorant of its contents, or should calculate on that ignorance in his readers, is really wonderful. As for the *soundness* or unsoundness of Paley's doctrine, *that* is a question of *opinion*, and is one on which I shall not now enter. But the *existence* of his opinions is a matter of *fact*; and is a fact of which one might have supposed all readers to be aware. But its having been thus overlooked, is a strong proof of what I remarked above, that an author of great celebrity may be much talked of, and yet little known.

I have thought it necessary to advert—not without reluctance—to this matter, because any such error, when detected (as it is sure to be, sooner or later), leads to consequences extending far beyond the immediate question it may happen to relate to. When a religious teacher makes such a misstatement of facts as proves him to be either grossly and culpably ignorant of what he ought to have clearly ascertained, or else, guilty of disingenuous suppression, all the rest of his teaching is likely to be regarded with a distrust which may be undeserved, but which cannot be wondered at.

In the published Sermons of Paley, there is much that is highly valuable and instructive, though in some parts, what he maintains is exceptionable, and has incurred from some a very severe censure; a censure which I cannot think wholly undeserved, though it is

so in part. He does certainly too much underrate the change requisite for *every* man in order to become acceptable to the Most High ; a change that is, of the character of Man such as Man is by nature, and left to himself without the aid of divine grace, into the character of those who are “ led by the Spirit of God,” as the Apostle says, to become “ sons of God.” And I think that, in treating of this subject, he was influenced for the worse by his theory of Morals. The conscience (or Moral-faculty) is liable, when Man is left to himself, to be perverted—to be debased—and to be deprived of its rightful supremacy over the whole Man. It needs to be elevated, to be corrected, and purified, and to be supported in its legitimate sovereignty. But all this is likely to be overlooked by one who, though himself, of course, possessing this Moral-faculty (as we all do, more or less) and in some degree unconsciously influenced by it, yet denies its existence, and makes what is commonly called Duty to consist merely in a calculation of loss and gain.

But, on the other hand, it is undeniable and is what ought not to be lost sight of, that, as Paley remarks, the far greater part of those whom the Apostles address were converts from Paganism. Now Paganism was a religion which required (not to be corrected, but) to be wholly eradicated. It was not, as some are apt to suppose, merely an imperfect religion, with a mixture of foolish superstitions ; but it was in fact the worship of evil demons ; and a worship corresponding with their character. “ Every abomination unto the Lord which He hateth” (as you read in the Books of Moses), “ have these nations done *unto their gods* ;” that is, the foulest wickedness was not only tolerated

and sanctioned by their religion, but was, in many instances, a part of their religion. And such is the case with the Hindu paganism at this day ; as we have now, at least, good reason to know.

Aristotle, in his treatise on *Politics*, though he does not venture to denounce altogether the religion of his countrymen, yet expressly warns them not to allow *young* persons to approach the temples of those deities of whose appointed worship the grossest profligacy formed an essential part ! Thus religion, instead of rectifying or restraining men's natural evil tendencies, was a direct source of corruption. And it may well be supposed therefore that a large portion of Paul's converts were persons who had long been living a life of gross profligacy. And as for the Jews, we find him declaring [Epis. to the Romans] that while they prided themselves on their observance of the ceremonial law, their immoral lives caused the name of the Lord to be "blasphemed among the Gentiles." Accordingly we find this Apostle alluding to the "former conversation" [mode of life] of his converts, "wherein in times past they walked," as perfectly detestable. They had been thoroughly alienated from the true God, not only in practice but in principle. But no word answering to "*conversion*" is ever employed by the Sacred Writers in reference to a baptized Christian ; although they had occasion to rebuke very severely some of their people (as you may see in the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians and elsewhere) for gross misconduct.

As for those persons (of whom, unhappily, there are not a few) who, having been born and bred in a christian country, lead an unchristian life, they are doubtless under a far heavier responsibility than Paul's

hearers who had been brought up in heathen darkness; and the change needful for them is at least as great, and perhaps more difficult, inasmuch as they have wilfully shut their eyes to the light. But the "conversion"—if that word must be used—which is needful for one who has been brought up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and from a child "has known the Holy Scriptures, and with whom such an education has been blest with success,—this must at least be something different from that of a heathen, or of one who has hitherto led an utterly ungodly life. And it would be perhaps all the better if different words were employed to denote different things; lest the notion should be encouraged which experience, as well as reason, shows there *is* a danger of,—that *every* one must pass a certain portion of his life in gross vice and irreligion, before he becomes a "converted character."*

The difference between the two cases may be thus illustrated: a skilful gardener, if he has to deal with a wilding tree which "bears evil fruit," will (as their phrase is) *head it down*, and *graft* it from a good fruit-tree; not however thenceforward neglecting it, but watching that the wilding stock does not push out shoots which would starve the graft. If again, he has in his garden a young vine of a good sort, he will pursue a different plan, though he will be far from neglecting the plant. He will carefully prune it, from time to time, and manure it, and fence it, and do his best to protect it from blights and other injuries. Now both of these procedures may be called "culture;" but

* See Bishop Fitzgerald's *Charge*.

they are different kinds of culture ; and it is best that they should be denoted by different words.

Something like this was probably Paley's meaning ; though his view is partly incorrect, in consequence of his adopting that theory of morals, which (as I have already observed) is strenuously maintained by many persons of a theological school the most opposite to his.

You will have observed that it is as a writer on the *evidences* of natural and of revealed religion that I consider Paley to be especially eminent. Though there is nothing of his that is not well worth an attentive perusal, I would place Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and his *Wealth of Nations*, (though not regarding either as infallibly right throughout,) higher than Paley's works on the same subjects. And Butler's *Moral Discourses* are more valuable still.

As a writer on evidences, I have spoken of Paley already. But I cannot conclude without a few very brief remarks on the subject of christian evidences itself.

There are some persons who from various causes, deprecate this study altogether ;* or at least would confine it to an exceedingly small number of learned men whose inclinations and opportunities have led them to devote their lives to it. I have heard even men of good sense in other points, remark that to investigate *all* the reasons for and against the reception of Christianity would be more than the labour of a whole life ; and that therefore all except perhaps

* See *Cautions for the Times*, No. xi. xii.

some five or six out of every million, had better not trouble themselves at all about the matter. It is very strange that it should fail to occur to any man of good sense, that it may be possible, and easy, and, in many cases, highly desirable, to have *sufficient* reasons for believing what we do believe; though these reasons may not be the twentieth part of what *might* be adduced, if there were any need for it. Any one of us, for instance, may be fully convinced, and on very good grounds, that he was in such and such places yesterday, and saw such and such persons, and said and did so and so. But *all* the evidence that *might* be collected, of all this—supposing, for instance, that this was needful, with a view to some trial that was going on—would perhaps fill a volume. Suppose, for example, you had to repel some charge by proving an *alibi*; what a multitude of circumstances, and what a crowd of witnesses, you might bring forward to prove that you really were in such a place at such a time.

In every case, except perhaps the one case of religion, every one would perceive the absurdity of refusing to attend to any reasons at all, because there might be a multitude of other reasons also, which we had not the power, or the leisure to investigate. And since therefore it has pleased the All-wise to create Man a rational animal, and there is always *some* cause, though often a very absurd one, for any one's believing or disbelieving as he does, and since on all subjects men are often led to reject valuable truths, and to assent to mischievous falsehoods, it is surely an important part of education that men should be trained in some degree to weigh evidence, and to distinguish good

reasons from sophistry, in any department of life, and not least in what concerns religion.

But when the mass of the unlearned people (it has been said) do believe in a true religion, no matter on what grounds, it is better to let them alone in their uninquiring faith, than to agitate and unsettle their minds by telling them about evidences. They should be kept in ignorance, we are told, that the truth of Christianity was ever doubted by any one; that is, they must be kept in ignorance not only of the world around them, but of all books of history, including the Bible. It has even been publicly maintained in a work which was the organ of a powerful and numerous party in our Church, that an ignorant rustic who believing Christianity to be true, merely because he has been told so by those he looks up to as his superiors, has a far *better* ground for his belief than Paley or Grotius, or any other such writer. Now this is the ground on which the ancient and the modern Pagans, and the Mahometans, rest their absurd faith, and reject the Gospel. The evidence therefore which has proved satisfactory to the most enlightened Christians is, it seems, absolutely inferior to that which is manifestly and notoriously good for nothing!

Yet it is possible that some of those who speak thus may really believe that Christianity itself *can* stand the test of evidence; but they wish that some *other* things also should be believed, which will *not* stand that test. They wish men to give credit to some mediæval legends of miracles, and unsupported traditions, and new dogmas of human device; and they would rather not encourage them to cultivate the habit which the Apostle Peter recommends, of being

“ready to give a reason of their hope.” He who is trying to pass a large amount of coins, some good and some counterfeit, will be alarmed at seeing you apply a chemical test to the pure gold, lest you should proceed in the same way with the rest.

Others not belonging to the party just alluded to, have publicly and very strongly proclaimed their conviction that any inquiry into the evidences of our religion is most likely to lead to infidelity. “Many thanks !” an infidel might reply, “for that admission ! I want nothing more. That all inquiry, while it will establish a belief in what is true, will overthrow belief in Christianity or any other imposture, is just what *I* think. But nothing coming from *me* could have near the force of such an admission from *you*.”

One is loth to attribute to writers who are professed advocates of Christianity an insincere profession, and a disguised hostility. And yet, supposing them sincere, the absurdity of their procedure seems almost incredible. “Save me from my friends,” we may say, “and let our enemies do their worst.” Let one of these writers imagine himself tried in a court of justice, and his counsel pleading for him in a similar manner : “Gentlemen of the jury, my client is an innocent and a worthy man, take my word for it : but I entreat you not to examine any witnesses, or listen to any pleadings ; for the more you inquire into the case, the more likely you will be to find him guilty.” Every one would say that this advocate was either a madman, or else wilfully betraying his client.*

One other class of persons I shall briefly notice, in

* See Note A. at the end.

conclusion, who take a different view, but I cannot think a right one, of the study of christian evidences. They acknowledge its use and necessity; but they dislike and deplore that necessity. They view the matter somewhat as any person of humane disposition does, the arming and training of soldiers; acknowledging, yet lamenting, the necessity of thus guarding against insurrections at home, or attacks from foreign nations; and though, when forced into a war, he rejoices in meeting with victory rather than defeat, he would much prefer peaceful tranquillity. Even so, these persons admit that evidences are necessary in order to repel unbelief; but all attention to the subject is connected in their minds with the idea of *doubt*; which they feel to be painful, and dread as something sinful.

Far different however are men's feelings in reference to any person or thing that they really do greatly value and admire, when they have a full and firm conviction.* No one in ordinary life considers it disagreeable to mark and dwell on the constantly recurring proofs of the excellent and admirable qualities of some highly valued friend—to observe how his character stands in strong contrast to that of ordinary men; and that while experience is constantly stripping off the fair outside from vain pretenders, and detecting the wrong motives which adulterate the seeming virtue of others, *his* sterling excellence is made more and more striking and conspicuous every day: on the contrary, we feel that this is a delightful exercise of the mind, and the more delightful the more we are

* *Cautions for the Times.*

disposed to love and honour him. Yet all these are *proofs*,—or what might be used as proofs, if needed,—of his really being of such a character. But is the contemplation of such proofs connected in our own mind with the idea of harassing doubt, and anxious contest? Should it not then be also delightful to a sincere Christian to mark, in like manner, the proofs which if he look for them, he will continually find recurring, that the religion he professes came not from man, but from God,—that the Great Master whom he adores was indeed the “way, the truth, and the life,”—that “never man spake like this man;”—and that the Sacred Writers who record his teaching were not mad enthusiasts, or crafty deceivers, but men who spoke in sincerity the words of truth and soberness which they learned from Him? Should he not feel the liveliest pleasure in comparing his religion with those false creeds which have sprung from human fraud and folly, and observing how striking is the difference?

And so also, in what is called natural theology—the proofs of the wisdom, goodness and power of God—how delightful to a pious mind is the contemplation of the evidence which it presents! What pleasure to trace, as far as we can, the countless instances of wise contrivance which surround us in the objects of nature,—the great and the small—from the fibres of an insect’s wing, to the structure of the most gigantic animals—from the minutest seed that vegetates, to the loftiest trees of the forest—and to mark everywhere the work of that same Creator’s hand, who has filled the universe with the monuments of His wisdom; so that we thus (as Paley has expressed it) make the universe to become one vast Temple.

It is not for the refutation of objectors merely, and for the conviction of doubters, that it is worth while to study in this manner, with the aid of such a guide as Paley, the two volumes—that of Nature and that of Revelation,—which Providence has opened before us, but because it is both profitable and gratifying to a well-constituted mind to trace in each of them the evident handwriting of Him, the Divine Author of both.

NOTE A.

IN confirmation of what has been said, I have thought it advisable to subjoin extracts (to which many more might have been added) from writers of different schools, to show the coincidences between an avowed Atheist and professed favourers of Christianity, of different parties, and the contrast they all present to the New Testament writers.

"Upon the whole, we may conclude that the christian Religion not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity; and whoever is moved by *Faith* to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience."—Hume's *Essay on Miracles* (at the end).

* * we are to be censured for having "shifted the ground of our belief from testimony to argument, and from faith to reason." * * *

In answering the question why our religion is to be believed, "the poor, ignorant, uninstructed peasant will probably come nearest to the answer of the Gospel. He will say, 'Because I have been told so by those who are wiser and better than myself. My parents told me so, and the clergyman of the parish told me so; and I hear the same whenever I go to church. And I put confidence in these persons, because it is natural that I should trust my superiors. I have never had reason to suspect that they would deceive me. I hear of persons who contradict and abuse them, but they are not such persons as I would wish to follow in any other matter of life, and therefore not in religion. I was born and baptized in the church, and the Bible tells me to stay in the church, and obey its teachers; and till I have equal authority for believing that it is not the church of Christ, as it is the Church of England, I intend to adhere to it.' Now, such reasoning as this will appear to this rational age very paltry and unsatisfactory: and yet the logic is as sound as the spirit is humble. And there is nothing to compare with it either intellectually, or morally, or religiously, in all the elaborate defences and evidences which would be produced from Paley, and Grotius, and Sumner, and Chalmers."—*British Critic*.

"The sacred writers have none of the timidity of their modern apologists. They never sue for an assent to their doctrines, but authoritatively command the acceptance of them. They denounce unbelief as guilt, and insist on faith as a virtue of the highest order. In their catholic invitations, the intellectual not less than the social distinctions of mankind, are unheeded. Every student of their writings is aware of these facts, &c. * * * * They presuppose that vigour of understanding may consist with feebleness of reason; and that the power of discriminating between religious truth and error does not depend

chiefly on the culture or on the exercise of the mere argumentative faculty. The special patrimony of the poor and illiterate—the Gospel—has been the stay of countless millions who never framed a syllogism. Of the great multitudes who, before and since the birth of Grotius, have lived in the peace and died in the consolations of our Faith, how small is the proportion of those whose convictions have been derived from the study of works like his. Of the numbers who have addicted themselves to such studies, how small is the proportion of those who have brought to the task either learning, or leisure, or industry, sufficient, &c. * * * He who lays the foundation of his faith on such evidences will too commonly end either in yielding a credulous and therefore an infirm assent, or in reposing in a self-sufficient and far more hazardous incredulity.”—*Edinburgh Review*.

“ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed on Him.”

“ We know that thou art a teacher sent from God ; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost except God be with him.”

“ If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin.”

“ The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me.”

“ Him God raised up, and showed Him openly ; not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen afore of God, even to us,” &c.

“ To Him bear all the Prophets witness.”

“ Be always ready to give to every one that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you,” &c.

The charge of “ *timidity*” brought against those who court inquiry, appeal to evidence, and defy refutation, reminds one of the anecdote told of some North-American Indians, who on one occasion, when acting as allies with our troops, were attacked by an enemy. The Indians, as their custom is, fled, and sheltered themselves behind trees, while the English soldiers stood firm under a heavy fire, and repulsed the assailants. They expected that their Indian friends would have admired their valour. But the interpretation these put upon it was, that the English were *too much frightened to run away* ;—that they were so paralysed by terror as not to have had sufficient presence of mind to provide for their safety !

THE END.

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HISTORIC
D O U B T S
RELATIVE TO
NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

Richard Whately

Is not the same reason available in theology and in politics?
Will you follow truth but to a certain point?—BURKE'S *Vindication
of Natural Society*.

The first author who stated fairly the connexion between the
evidence of testimony and the evidence of experience, was Hume, in
his *ESSAY ON MIRACLES*; a work *abounding in maxims of great use in
the conduct of life*.—*Edinburgh Review*, Sept. 1814, p. 328.

NINTH EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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M DCCC XLIX.

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PREFACE.

SEVERAL of the readers of this little work have derived much amusement from the mistakes of others respecting its nature and object. It has been by some represented as a serious attempt to inculcate universal scepticism; while others have considered it as a *jeu d'esprit*, &c. The Author does not, however, design to entertain his readers with accounts of the mistakes which have arisen respecting it; because many of them, he is convinced, would be received with incredulity; and he could not, without an indelicate exposure of individuals, verify his anecdotes.

But some sensible readers have complained of the difficulty of determining *what* they are to believe. Of the existence of Buonaparte, indeed, they remained fully convinced; nor, if it were left doubtful, would any important results ensue; but if they can give no *satisfactory reason* for their conviction, how can they know, it is asked, that they may not be mistaken as to other points of greater consequence, on which they are no less fully convinced, but on which all men are *not* agreed? The Author has accordingly been solicited to

endeavour to frame some canons which may furnish a standard for determining what evidence is to be received.

This he conceives to be impracticable, except to that extent to which it is accomplished by a sound system of Logic; including under that title, a portion—that which relates to the “Laws of Evidence”—of what is sometimes treated of under the head of “Rhetoric.” But the full and complete accomplishment of such an object would confer on man the unattainable attribute of infallibility.

But the difficulty complained of, he conceives to arise, in many instances, from men’s *misstating the grounds of their own conviction*. They are convinced, indeed, and perhaps with very sufficient reason; but they imagine this reason to be a different one from what it is. The evidence to which they have assented is applied to their minds in a different manner from that in which they believe it is—and suppose it ought to be—applied. And when challenged to defend and justify their own belief, they feel at a loss, because they are attempting to maintain a position which is not in fact that in which their force lies.

For a development of the nature, the consequences, and the remedies of this mistake, the reader is referred to “Hinds on Inspiration,” pp. 30—46. If such a development is to be found in any earlier works, the Author of the following pages at least has never chanced to meet with any attempt of the kind.*

* See *Elements of Rhetoric*, p. i. ch. 2, § 4.

It has been objected, again, by some persons of no great logical accuracy of thought, that as there would not be any *moral blame* imputable to one who should seriously disbelieve, or doubt, the existence of Buonaparte, so neither is a rejection of the Scripture-histories to be considered as implying anything morally culpable.

The same objection, such as it is, would apply equally to many of the Parables of the New Testament. It might be said, for instance, that as a woman who should decline taking the trouble of searching for her lost "piece of silver," or a merchant who should neglect making an advantageous purchase of a "goodly pearl," would be guilty of no moral wrong, it must follow that there is nothing morally wrong in neglecting to reclaim a lost sinner, or in rejecting the Gospel, &c.

But any man of common sense readily perceives that the force of these parables consists in the circumstance that men do *not* usually show this carelessness about temporal goods; and, therefore, are guilty of gross and culpable *inconsistency*, if they are comparatively careless about what is far more important.

So, also, in the present case. If any man's mind were so constituted as to reject the same evidence in *all* matters alike—if, for instance, he really doubted or disbelieved the existence of Buonaparte, and considered the Egyptian pyramids as fabulous, because, forsooth, he had no "experience" of the erection of such huge structures, and *had* experience of travellers telling huge lies—he would be regarded, perhaps, as very silly, or

as insane, but not as morally culpable. But if (as is intimated in the concluding sentence of this work) a man is influenced in one case by objections which, in another case, he would deride, then he stands convicted of being unfairly biassed by his prejudices.

It is only necessary to add, that as this work first appeared in the year 1819, many things are spoken of in the present tense, to which the past would now be applicable.

A Postscript was added to the third edition, which was published soon after the accounts of Buonaparte's death reached us ; and another at the time of the supposed removal of his remains. A third, in reference to some recent occurrences, has been added to the present edition.

HISTORIC DOUBTS

RELATIVE TO

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

LONG as the public attention has been occupied by the extraordinary personage from whose ambition we are supposed to have so narrowly escaped, the subject seems to have lost scarcely anything of its interest. We are still occupied in recounting the exploits, discussing the character, inquiring into the present situation, and even conjecturing as to the future prospects of Napoleon Buonaparte.

Nor is this at all to be wondered at, if we consider the very extraordinary nature of those exploits, and of that character; their greatness and extensive importance, as well as the unexampled strangeness of the events, and also that strong additional stimulant, the mysterious uncertainty that hangs over the character of the man. If it be doubtful whether any history (exclusive of such as is confessedly fabulous) ever attributed to its hero such a series of wonderful achievements com-

pressed into so small a space of time, it is certain that to no one were ever assigned so many dissimilar characters.

It is true, indeed, that party prejudices have drawn a favourable and an unfavourable portrait of almost every eminent man; but amidst all the diversities of colouring, something of the same general outline is always distinguishable. And even the virtues in the one description bear some resemblance to the vices of another: rashness, for instance, will be called courage, or courage, rashness; heroic firmness, and obstinate pride, will correspond in the two opposite descriptions; and in some leading features both will agree. Neither the friends nor the enemies of Philip of Macedon, or of Julius Cæsar, ever questioned their COURAGE, or their MILITARY SKILL.

With Buonaparte, however, it has been otherwise. This obscure Corsican adventurer, a man, according to some, of extraordinary talents and courage, according to others, of very moderate abilities, and a rank coward, advanced rapidly in the French army, obtained a high command, gained a series of important victories, and, elated by success, embarked in an expedition against Egypt; which was planned and conducted, according to some, with the most consummate skill, according to others, with the utmost wildness and folly: he was

unsuccessful, however; and leaving the army of Egypt in a very distressed situation, he returned to France, and found the nation, or at least the army, so favourably disposed towards him, that he was enabled, with the utmost ease, to overthrow the existing government, and obtain for himself the supreme power; at first under the modest appellation of Consul, but afterwards with the more sounding title of Emperor. While in possession of this power, he overthrew the most powerful coalitions of the other European States against him; and though driven from the sea by the British fleets, overran nearly the whole continent, triumphant; finishing a war, not unfrequently, in a single campaign, he entered the capitals of most of the hostile potentates, deposed and created Kings at his pleasure, and appeared the virtual sovereign of the chief part of the continent, from the frontiers of Spain to those of Russia. Even those countries we find him invading with prodigious armies, defeating their forces, penetrating to their capitals, and threatening their total subjugation. But at Moscow his progress is stopped: a winter of unusual severity, co-operating with the efforts of the Russians, totally destroys his enormous host: and the German sovereigns throw off the yoke, and combine to oppose him. He raises another vast

army, which is also ruined at Leipsic; and again another, with which, like a second Antæus, he for some time maintains himself in France; but is finally defeated, deposed, and banished to the island of Elba, of which the sovereignty is conferred on him. Thence he returns, in about nine months, at the head of 600 men, to attempt the deposition of King Louis, who had been peaceably recalled; the French nation declare in his favour, and he is reinstated without a struggle. He raises another great army to oppose the allied powers, which is totally defeated at Waterloo; he is a second time deposed, surrenders to the British, and is placed in confinement at the island of St. Helena. Such is the outline of the eventful history presented to us; in the detail of which, however, there is almost every conceivable variety of statement; while the motives and conduct of the chief actor are involved in still greater doubt, and the subject of still more eager controversy.

In the midst of these controversies, the preliminary question, concerning the *existence* of this extraordinary personage, seems never to have occurred to any one as a matter of doubt; and to show even the smallest hesitation in admitting it, would probably be regarded as an excess of scept-

ticism; on the ground that this point has always been taken for granted by the disputants on all sides, being indeed implied by the very nature of their disputes.

But is it in fact found that *undisputed* points are always such as have been the most carefully examined as to the evidence on which they rest? that facts or principles which are taken for granted, without controversy, as the common basis of opposite opinions, are always themselves established on sufficient grounds? On the contrary, is not any such fundamental point, from the very circumstance of its being taken for granted at once, and the attention drawn off to some other question, likely to be admitted on insufficient evidence, and the flaws in that evidence overlooked? Experience will teach us that such instances often occur: witness, the well-known anecdote of the Royal Society; to whom King Charles II. proposed as a question, whence it is that a vessel of water receives no addition of weight from a live fish being put into it, though it does, if the fish be dead. Various solutions, of great ingenuity, were proposed, discussed, objected to, and defended; nor was it till they had been long bewildered in the inquiry, that it occurred to them to *try the experiment*; by which they at once ascertained, that the phænomenon which they were striving to account

for,—which was the acknowledged basis and substratum, as it were, of their debates,—had no existence but in the invention of the witty monarch.*

Another instance of the same kind is so very remarkable that I cannot forbear mentioning it. It was objected to the system of Copernicus when first brought forward, that if the earth turned on its axis as he represented, a stone dropped from the summit of a tower would not fall at the foot of it, but at a great distance to the west; *in the same manner as a stone dropped from the mast-head of a ship in full sail, does not fall at the foot of the mast, but towards the stern.* To this it was answered, that a stone being a *part* of the earth obeys the same laws, and moves with it; whereas, it is no part of the ship; of which, consequently, its motion is independent. This solution was admitted by some, but opposed by

* “ A report is spread, (says Voltaire in one of his works,) “ that there is, in some country or other, a giant as big as a “ mountain; and men presently fall to hot disputing concern- “ ing the precise length of his nose, the breadth of his thumb, “ and other particulars, and anathematize each other for heterodoxy of belief concerning them. In the midst of all, if “ some bold sceptic ventures to hint a doubt as to the existence of this giant, all are ready to join against him, and “ tear him to pieces.” This looks almost like a prophetic allegory relating to the gigantic Napoleon.

others; and the controversy went on with spirit; nor was it till *one hundred years* after the death of Copernicus, that the experiment being tried, it was ascertained that the stone thus dropped from the head of the mast *does* fall at the foot of it!*

Let it be observed that I am not now impugning any one particular narrative; but merely showing generally, that what is *unquestioned* is not necessarily unquestionable; since men will often, at the very moment when they are accurately sifting the evidence of some disputed point, admit hastily, and on the most insufficient grounds, what they have been accustomed to see taken for granted.

The celebrated Hume† has pointed out, also, the readiness with which men believe, on very slight evidence, any story that pleases their imagination by its admirable and marvellous character. Such

* Οὕτως ἀταλαίπωρος τοῖς πολλοῖς ἡ ζήτησις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔτοιμα μᾶλλον τρέπονται. Thucyd. b. i. c. 20.

† “With what greediness are the miraculous accounts of “travellers received, their descriptions of sea and land monsters, their relations of wonderful adventures, strange men, “and uncouth manners!”—*Hume’s Essay on Miracles*, p. 179, 12mo; p. 185, 8vo, 1767; p. 117, 8vo, 1817.

N.B.—In order to give every possible facility of reference, three editions of Hume’s *Essays* have been generally employed; a 12mo, London, 1756, and two 8vo editions.

hasty credulity, however, as he well remarks, is utterly unworthy of a philosophical mind; which should rather suspend its judgment the more, in proportion to the strangeness of the account, and yield to none but the most decisive and unimpeachable proofs.

Let it, then, be allowed us, as is surely reasonable, just to inquire, with respect to the extraordinary story I have been speaking of, on what evidence we believe it. We shall be told that it is *notorious*; i.e., in plain English, it is very *much talked about*. But as the generality of those who talk about Buonaparte do not even pretend to speak from *their own authority*, but merely to repeat what they have casually heard, we cannot reckon them as in any degree witnesses; but must allow ninety-nine hundredths of what we are told to be mere hearsay, which would not be at all the more worthy of credit even if it were repeated by ten times as many more. As for those who profess to have *personally known* Napoleon Buonaparte, and to have *themselves witnessed* his transactions, I write not for them: *if any such there be*, who are inwardly conscious of the truth of all they relate, I have nothing to say to them, but to beg that they will be tolerant and charitable towards their neighbours, who have not the same means of ascertaining the truth, and who may well

be excused for remaining doubtful about such extraordinary events, till most unanswerable proofs shall be adduced. "I would not have believed such a thing, if I had not seen it," is a common preface or appendix to a narrative of marvels; and usually calls forth from an intelligent hearer the appropriate answer, "*no more will I.*"

Let us, however, endeavour to trace up some of this hearsay evidence as far towards its source as we are able. Most persons would refer to the *newspapers* as the authority from which their knowledge on the subject was derived; so that, generally speaking, we may say it is on the testimony of the newspapers that men believe in the existence and exploits of Napoleon Buonaparte.

It is rather a remarkable circumstance, that it is common to hear Englishmen speak of the impudent fabrications of foreign newspapers, and express wonder that any one can be found to credit them; while they conceive that, in this favoured land, the liberty of the press is a sufficient security for veracity. It is true they often speak contemptuously of such "newspaper stories" as last but a short time; indeed they continually see them contradicted within a day or two in the same paper, or their falsity detected by some journal of an opposite party; but still whatever is *long adhered to* and often *repeated*, especially if it also appear in *several*

different papers (and this, though they notoriously copy from one another), is almost sure to be generally believed. Whence this high respect which is practically paid to newspaper-authority? Do men think, that because a witness has been perpetually detected in falsehood, he may therefore be the more safely believed whenever he is *not* detected? or does adherence to a story, and frequent repetition of it, render it the more credible? On the contrary, is it not a common remark in other cases, that a liar will generally stand to and reiterate what he has once said, merely because he *has* said it?

Let us, if possible, divest ourselves of this superstitious veneration for everything that appears "in print," and examine a little more systematically the evidence which is adduced.

I suppose it will not be denied, that the three following are among the most important points to be ascertained, in deciding on the credibility of witnesses; first, whether they have the means of gaining correct *information*; secondly, whether they have any *interest* in concealing truth, or propagating falsehood; and, thirdly, whether they *agree* in their testimony. Let us examine the present witnesses upon all these points.

First, what means have the editors of newspapers

for gaining correct information? We know not, except from their own statements. Besides what is copied from other journals, foreign or British, (which is usually more than three-fourths of the news published,)* they profess to refer to the authority of certain "private correspondents" abroad; *who* these correspondents are, what means *they* have of obtaining information, or whether they exist at all, we have no way of ascertaining. We find ourselves in the condition of the Hindoos, who are told by their priests that the earth stands

* "Suppose a fact to be transmitted through twenty persons; the first communicating it to the second, the second to the third, &c., and let the probability of each testimony be expressed by nine-tenths, (that is, suppose that of ten reports made by each witness, nine only are true,) then, at every time the story passes from one witness to another, the evidence is reduced to nine-tenths of what it was before. Thus, after it has passed through the whole twenty, the evidence will be found to be less than one-eighth."—
LA PLACE, *Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités*.

That is, the chances for the fact thus attested being true, will be, according to this distinguished calculator, less than one in eight. Very few of the common newspaper-stories, however, relating to foreign countries, could be traced, if the matter were carefully investigated, up to an actual eye-witness, even through twenty intermediate witnesses; and many of the steps of our ladder, would, I fear, prove but rotten; few of the reporters would deserve to have *one in ten* fixed as the proportion of their false accounts.

on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise; but are left to find out for themselves what the tortoise stands on, or whether it stands on anything at all.

So much for our clear knowledge of the means of *information* possessed by these witnesses; next, for the grounds on which we are to calculate on their *veracity*.

Have they not a manifest interest in circulating the wonderful accounts of Napoleon Buonaparte and his achievements, whether true or false? Few would read newspapers if they did not sometimes find wonderful or important news in them; and we may safely say that no subject was ever found so inexhaustibly interesting as the present.

It may be urged, however, that there are several adverse political parties, of which the various public prints are respectively the organs, and who would not fail to expose each other's fabrications.* Doubtless they would, if they could do so without at the same time exposing *their own*; but identity of

* "I did not mention the difficulty of detecting a falsehood in any private or even public history, at the time and place where it is said to happen; much more where the scene is removed to ever so small a distance. . . . But the matter never comes to any issue, if trusted to the common method of altercation and debate and flying rumours."—*Hume's Essay on Miracles*, p. 195, 12mo; pp. 200, 201, 8vo, 1767; p. 127, 8vo, 1817.

interests may induce a community of operations up to a certain point. And let it be observed that the object of contention between these rival parties is, *who* shall have the administration of public affairs, the control of public expenditure, and the disposal of places: the question, I say, is, not, whether the people shall be governed or not, but, *by which party* they shall be governed;—not whether the taxes shall be paid or not, but *who* shall *receive* them. Now it must be admitted, that Buonaparte is a political bugbear, most convenient to *any* administration: “if you do not adopt our measures and “ reject those of our opponents, Buonaparte will be “ sure to prevail over you; if you do not submit “ to the Government, at least under *our* administration, this formidable enemy will take advantage of your insubordination, to conquer and “ enslave you: pay your taxes cheerfully, or the “ tremendous Buonaparte will take all from you.” Buonaparte, in short, was the burden of every song; his redoubted name was the charm which always succeeded in unloosing the purse-strings of the nation. And let us not be too sure,* safe as we now think ourselves, that some occasion may not occur for again producing on the stage so useful a personage: it is not merely to naughty

* See the third Postscript appended to this edition.

children in the nursery that the threat of being "given to Buonaparte" has proved effectual.

It is surely probable, therefore, that, with an object substantially the same, all parties may have availed themselves of one common instrument. It is not necessary to suppose that for this purpose they secretly entered into a formal agreement; though, by the way, there are reports afloat, that the editors of the *Courier* and *Morning Chronicle* hold amicable consultations as to the conduct of their public warfare: I will not take upon me to say that this is incredible; but at any rate it is not necessary for the establishment of the probability I contend for. Neither again would I imply that *all* newspaper editors are utterers of forged stories, "knowing them to be forged;" most likely the great majority of them publish what they find in other papers with the same simplicity that their readers peruse it; and therefore, it must be observed, are not at all more proper than their readers to be cited as authorities.

Still it will be said, that unless we suppose a regularly preconcerted plan, we must at least expect to find great discrepancies in the accounts published. Though they might adopt the general outline of facts one from another, they would have to fill up the detail for themselves; and in this, therefore, we should meet with infinite and irreconcilable variety.

Now this is precisely the point I am tending to; for the fact exactly accords with the above supposition; the discordance and mutual contradictions of these witnesses being such as would alone throw a considerable shade of doubt over their testimony. It is not in minute circumstances alone that the discrepancy appears, such as might be expected to appear in a narrative substantially true; but in very great and leading transactions, and such as are very intimately connected with the supposed hero. For instance, it is by no means agreed whether Buonaparte led in person the celebrated charge over the bridge of Lodi, (for *celebrated* it certainly is, as well as the siege of Troy, whether either event ever really took place or no,) or was safe in the rear, while Augereau performed the exploit. The same doubt hangs over the charge of the French cavalry at Waterloo. The peasant Lacoste, who professed to have been Buonaparte's guide on the day of battle, and who earned a fortune by detailing over and over again to visitors all the particulars of what the great man said and did up to the moment of flight,—this same Lacoste has been suspected by others, besides me, of having never even been near the great man, and having fabricated the whole story for the sake of making a gain of the credulity of travellers. In the accounts that are extant of the battle itself, published by persons professing to have been

present, the reader will find that there is a discrepancy of *three or four hours* as to the time when the battle began!—a battle, be it remembered, not fought with javelins and arrows, like those of the ancients, in which one part of a large army might be engaged, while a distant portion of the same army knew nothing of it; but a battle commencing (if indeed it were ever fought at all) with the *firing of cannon*, which would have announced pretty loudly what was going on.

It is no less uncertain whether or no this strange personage poisoned in Egypt an hospital-full of his own soldiers, and butchered in cold blood a garrison that had surrendered. But not to multiply instances; the battle of Borodino, which is represented as one of the greatest ever fought, was unequivocally claimed as a victory by both parties; nor is the question decided at this day. We have official accounts on both sides, circumstantially detailed, in the names of supposed respectable persons, professing to have been present on the spot; yet totally irreconcilable. *Both* these accounts *may* be false; but since *one* of them *must* be false, that one (it is no matter *which* we suppose) proves incontrovertibly this important maxim; that *it is possible for a narrative—however circumstantial—however steadily maintained—however public, and however important, the events it relates—however*

grave the authority on which it is published—to be nevertheless an entire fabrication!

Many of the events which have been recorded were probably believed much the more readily and firmly, from the apparent caution and hesitation with which they were at first published,—the vehement contradiction in our papers of many pretended French accounts,—and the abuse lavished upon them for falsehood, exaggeration, and gasconade. But is it not possible,—is it not indeed perfectly natural,—that the publishers even of known falsehood should assume this cautious demeanour, and this abhorrence of exaggeration, in order the more easily to gain credit? Is it not also very possible, that those who actually believed what they published, may have suspected mere *exaggeration* in stories which were entire *fictions*? Many men have that sort of simplicity, that they think themselves quite secure against being deceived, provided they believe only *part* of the story they hear; when perhaps the whole is equally false. So that perhaps these simple-hearted editors, who were so vehement against lying bulletins, and so wary in announcing their great news, were in the condition of a clown, who thinks he has bought a great bargain of a Jew because he has beat down the price perhaps from a guinea to a crown, for some article that is not really worth a groat.

With respect to the *character* of Buonaparte, the dissonance is, if possible, still greater. According to some, he was a wise, humane, magnanimous hero; others paint him as a monster of cruelty, meanness, and perfidy: some, even of those who are most inveterate against him, speak very highly of his political and military ability; others place him on the very verge of insanity. But allowing that all this may be the colouring of party-prejudice, (which surely is allowing a great deal,) there is one point to which such a solution will hardly apply: if there be anything that can be clearly ascertained in history, one would think it must be the *personal courage* of a *military man*; yet here we are as much at a loss as ever; at the very same times, and on the same occasions, he is described by different writers as a man of undaunted intrepidity, and as an absolute poltroon.

What, then, are we to believe? If we are disposed to credit all that is told us, we must believe in the existence not only of one, but of two or three Buonapartes; if we admit nothing but what is well-authenticated, we shall be compelled to doubt of the existence of any.*

* We entertain a suspicion concerning any matter of fact, "when the witnesses *contradict* each other; when they are "of a *suspicious* character; when they have an *interest* in "what they affirm."—*Hume's Essay on Miracles*, p. 172, 12mo; p. 176, 8vo, 1767; p. 113, 8vo, 1817.

It appears, then, that those on whose testimony the existence and actions of Buonaparte are generally believed, fail in ALL the most essential points on which the credibility of witnesses depends: first, we have no assurance that they have access to correct information; secondly, they have an apparent interest in propagating falsehood; and, thirdly, they palpably contradict each other in the most important points.

Another circumstance which throws additional suspicion on these tales is, that the whig-party, as they are called,—the warm advocates for liberty, and opposers of the encroachments of monarchical power, — have for some time past strenuously espoused the cause, and vindicated the character of Buonaparte, who is represented by all as having been, if not a tyrant, at least an absolute despot. One of the most forward in this cause is a gentleman, who once stood foremost in holding up this very man to public execration,—who first published, and long maintained against popular incredulity, the accounts of his atrocities in Egypt. Now that such a course should be adopted for party-purposes, by those who are aware that the whole story is a fiction, and the hero of it imaginary, seems not very incredible; but if they believed in the real existence of this despot, I cannot conceive how they could so forsake their

principles as to advocate his cause, and eulogize his character.

After all, it may be expected that many who perceive the force of these objections, will yet be loath to think it possible that they and the public at large can have been so long and so greatly imposed upon. And thus it is that the magnitude and boldness of a fraud becomes its best support; the millions who for so many ages have believed in Mahomet or Brahma, lean as it were on each other for support; and not having vigour of mind enough boldly to throw off vulgar prejudices, and dare be wiser than the multitude, persuade themselves that what so many have acknowledged must be true. But I call on those who boast their philosophical freedom of thought, and would fain tread in the steps of Hume and other inquirers of the like exalted and speculative genius, to follow up fairly and fully their own principles, and, throwing off the shackles of authority, to examine carefully the evidence of whatever is proposed to them, before they admit its truth.

That even in this enlightened age, as it is called, a whole nation may be egregiously imposed upon, even in matters which intimately concern them, may be proved (if it has not been already proved) by the following instance: it was stated in the newspapers, that, a month after the battle of Tra-

falgar, an English officer, who had been a prisoner of war, and was exchanged, returned to this country from France, and beginning to condole with his countrymen on the terrible *defeat* they had sustained, was infinitely astonished to learn that the battle of Trafalgar was a splendid victory: he had been assured, he said, that in that battle the English had been totally defeated; and the French were fully and universally persuaded that such was the fact. Now if this report of the belief of the French nation was *not* true, the British public were completely imposed upon; if it *were* true, then both nations were, at the same time, rejoicing in the event of the same battle, as a signal victory to themselves; and consequently one or other, at least, of these nations must have been the dupes of their government: for if the battle was never fought at all, or was not decisive on either side, in that case *both* parties were deceived. This instance, I conceive, is absolutely demonstrative of the point in question.

“But what shall we say to the testimony of those many respectable persons who went to Plymouth on purpose, and saw Buonaparte with their own eyes? must they not trust their senses?” I would not disparage either the eyesight or the veracity of these gentlemen. I am ready to allow that they went to Plymouth for the

purpose of seeing Buonaparte; nay, more, that they actually rowed out into the harbour in a boat, and came alongside of a man-of-war, on whose deck they saw a man in a cocked hat, who, *they were told*, was Buonaparte. This is the utmost point to which their testimony goes; how they ascertained that this man in the cocked hat had gone through all the marvellous and romantic adventures with which we have so long been amused, we are not told. Did they perceive in his physiognomy, his true name, and authentic history? Truly this evidence is such as country people give one for a story of apparitions; if you discover any signs of incredulity, they triumphantly show the very house which the ghost haunted, the identical dark corner where it used to vanish, and perhaps even the tombstone of the person whose death it foretold. Jack Cade's nobility was supported by the same irresistible kind of evidence: having asserted that the eldest son of Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March, was stolen by a beggar-woman, "became a brick-layer when he came to age," and was the father of the supposed Jack Cade; one of his companions confirms the story, by saying, "Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it; therefore, deny it not."

Much of the same kind is the testimony of our

brave countrymen, who are ready to produce the scars they received in fighting against this terrible Buonaparte. That they fought and were wounded, they may safely testify; and probably they no less firmly *believe* what they were *told* respecting the cause in which they fought: it would have been a high breach of discipline to doubt it; and they, I conceive, are men better skilled in handling a musket, than in sifting evidence, and detecting imposture. But I defy any one of them to come forward and declare, *on his own knowledge*, what was the cause in which he fought,—under whose commands the opposed generals acted,—and whether the person who issued those commands did really perform the mighty achievements we are told of.

Let those, then, who pretend to philosophical freedom of inquiry,—who scorn to rest their opinions on popular belief, and to shelter themselves under the example of the unthinking multitude, consider carefully, each one for himself, what is the evidence proposed to himself in particular, for the existence of such a person as Napoleon Buonaparte:—I do not mean, whether there ever was a person bearing that *name*, for that is a question of no consequence; but whether any such person ever performed all the wonderful things attributed to him;—let him then weigh well the objections to that evidence, (of which I have given but a hasty

and imperfect sketch,) and if he then finds it amount to anything *more* than a probability, I have only to congratulate him on his easy faith.

But the same testimony which would have great weight in establishing a thing intrinsically probable, will lose part of this weight in proportion as the matter attested is improbable; and if adduced in support of anything that is at variance with uniform experience,* will be rejected at once by all sound reasoners. Let us then consider what sort of a story it is that is proposed to our acceptance. How grossly contradictory are the reports of the different authorities, I have already remarked: but consider, by itself, the story told by any one of them; it carries an air of fiction and romance on the very face of it. All the events are great, and splendid, and marvellous;† great armies,—great victories,—great frosts,—great reverses, — “hair-breadth ’scapes,” — empires sub-

* “That testimony itself derives all its force from experience, seems very certain.
 “. . . The first author, we believe, who stated fairly the connexion between the evidence of testimony and the evidence of experience, was HUME, in his Essay on Miracles, “a work . . . abounding in maxims of great use in the conduct of life.”—*Edin. Review*, Sept. 1814, p. 328.

† “Suppose, for instance, that the fact which the testimony endeavours to establish partakes of the extraordinary

verted in a few days; everything happened in defiance of political calculations, and in opposition to the *experience* of past times; everything upon that grand scale, so common in Epic Poetry, so rare in real life; and thus calculated to strike the imagination of the vulgar, and to remind the sober-thinking few of the Arabian Nights. Every event, too, has that *roundness* and completeness which is so characteristic of fiction; nothing is done by halves; we have *complete* victories,—*total* overthrows,—*entire* subversion of empires,—*perfect* re-establishments of them,—crowded upon us in rapid succession. To enumerate the improbabilities of each of the several parts of this history, would fill volumes; but they are so fresh in every one's memory, that there is no need of such a detail: let any judicious man, not ignorant of history and of human nature, revolve them in his mind, and consider how far they are conformable to Experience,* our best and only sure guide. In vain will

“and the marvellous; in that case, the evidence resulting from the testimony receives a diminution, greater or less in proportion as the fact is more or less unusual.”—*Hume's Essay on Miracles*, p. 173, 12mo; p. 176, 8vo, 1767; p. 113, 8vo, 1817.

* “The ultimate standard by which we determine all disputes that may arise is always derived from experience and observation.”—*Hume's Essay on Miracles*, p. 172, 12mo; p. 175, 8vo, 1767; p. 112, 8vo, 1817.

he seek in history for something similar to this wonderful Buonaparte; "nought but himself can be his parallel."

Will the conquests of Alexander be compared with his? *They* were effected over a rabble of effeminate, undisciplined barbarians; else his progress would hardly have been so rapid: witness his father Philip, who was much longer occupied in subduing the comparatively insignificant territory of the warlike and civilized Greeks, notwithstanding their being divided into numerous petty States, whose mutual jealousy enabled him to contend with them separately. But the Greeks had never made such progress in arts and arms as the great and powerful States of Europe, which Buonaparte is represented as so speedily overpowering. His empire has been compared to the Roman: mark the contrast; he gains in a few years, that dominion, or at least control, over Germany, wealthy, civilized, and powerful, which the Romans in the plenitude of their power, could not obtain, during a struggle of as many centuries, against the ignorant half-savages who then possessed it; of whom Tacitus remarks, that, up to his own time they had been "triumphed over rather than conquered."

Another peculiar circumstance in the history of this extraordinary personage is, that when it is

found convenient to represent him as defeated, though he is by no means defeated by halves, but involved in much more sudden and total ruin than the personages of real history usually meet with; yet, if it is thought fit he should be restored, it is done as quickly and completely as if Merlin's rod had been employed. He enters Russia with a prodigious army, which is totally ruined by an unprecedented hard winter; (everything relating to this man is *prodigious* and *unprecedented*;) yet in a few months we find him intrusted with another great army in Germany, which is also totally ruined at Leipsic; making, inclusive of the Egyptian, the third great army thus totally lost: yet the French are so good-natured as to furnish him with another, sufficient to make a formidable stand in France; he is, however, *conquered, and presented with the sovereignty of Elba*; (surely, by the bye, some more *probable* way might have been found of disposing of him, till again wanted, than to place him thus on the very verge of his ancient dominions;) thence he returns to France, where he is received with open arms, and enabled to lose a fifth great army at Waterloo; yet so eager were these people to be a sixth time led to destruction, that it was found necessary to confine *him* in an island some thousand miles off, and to quarter foreign troops upon *them*, lest they should make an insurrection

in his favour!*

Does any one believe all this, and yet refuse to believe a miracle? Or rather, what is this but a miracle? Is it not a violation of the laws of nature? for surely there are moral laws of nature as well as physical; which though more liable to exceptions in this or that particular case, are no less *true as general rules* than the laws of matter, and therefore cannot be violated and contradicted *beyond a certain point*, without a miracle.†

* Ἡ θαύματα πολλά.

Καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν φρένας

ὙΠΕΡ ΤΟΝ ΑΛΗΘΗ ΛΟΓΟΝ

Δεδειδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις

Ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι. PIND. Olymp. 1.

† This doctrine, though hardly needing confirmation from authority, is supported by that of Hume; his eighth essay is, throughout, an argument for the doctrine of “Philosophical necessity,” drawn entirely from the general uniformity, observable in the course of nature with respect to the principles of *human conduct*, as well as those of the material universe; from which uniformity, he observes, it is that we are enabled, *in both cases*, to form our judgments by means of *Experience*: “and if,” says he, “we would explode any forgery in history, we cannot make use of a more convincing argument, than to prove that the actions ascribed to any person, are directly contrary to the course of nature. The veracity of Quintus Curtius is as suspicious when he describes the supernatural courage of Alexander, by which he was hurried on singly to attack multitudes, as when he describes his supernatural force and activity, by which he was able to resist them. So readily

Nay, there is this additional circumstance which renders the contradiction of Experience more glaring in this case than in that of the miraculous histories which ingenious sceptics have held up to contempt: all the advocates of miracles admit that they are rare exceptions to the general course of nature; but contend that they must needs be so, on account of the rarity of those extraordinary *occasions* which are the *reason* of their being performed: a Miracle, they say, does not happen every day, because a Revelation is not given every

“and universally do we acknowledge a *uniformity in human motives and actions as well as in the operations of body.*”—*Eighth Essay*, p. 131, 12mo; p. 85, 8vo, 1817.

Accordingly, in the tenth essay, his use of the term “miracle,” after having called it “a transgression of a law of nature,” plainly shows that he meant to include *human* nature: “no testimony,” says he, “is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a nature that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish.” The term “prodigy” also (which he all along employs as synonymous with “miracle”) is applied to testimony, in the same manner, immediately after: “In the foregoing reasoning we have supposed that the falsehood of that testimony would be a kind of *prodigy.*” Now had he meant to confine the meaning of “miracle,” and “prodigy,” to a violation of the laws of *matter*, the epithet “*miraculous,*” applied even thus hypothetically, to *false testimony*, would be as unmeaning as the epithets “green,” or “square;” the only possible sense in

day. It would be foreign to the present purpose to seek for arguments against this answer; I leave it to those who are engaged in the controversy, to find a reply to it; but my present object is, to point out that this solution does not at all apply in the present case. Where is the peculiarity of the *occasion*? What sufficient *reason* is there for a series of events occurring in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which never took place before? Was Europe at that period peculiarly

which we can apply to it, even in imagination, the term “miraculous,” is that of “highly improbable,”—“contrary “to those laws of nature which respect human conduct:” and in this sense accordingly he uses the word in the very next sentence: “When any one tells me that he saw a dead man “restored to life, I immediately consider with myself whether “it be more *probable* that this person should either deceive “or be deceived, or that the fact which he relates should “really have happened. I weigh the one *miracle* against “the other.”—*Hume’s Essay on Miracles*, pp. 176, 177, 12mo; p. 182, 8vo, 1767; p. 115, 8vo, 1817.

See also a passage above quoted from the same essay, where he speaks of “the *miraculous* accounts of travellers;” evidently using the word in this sense.

Perhaps it was superfluous to cite authority for applying the term “miracle” to whatever is “highly improbable;” but it is important to the students of Hume, to be fully aware that *he* uses those two expressions as synonymous; since otherwise they would mistake the meaning of that passage which he justly calls “a general maxim worthy of our “attention.”

weak, and in a state of barbarism, that one man could achieve such conquests, and acquire such a vast empire? On the contrary, she was flourishing in the height of strength and civilization. Can the persevering attachment and blind devotedness of the French to this man, be accounted for by his being the descendant of a long line of kings, whose race was hallowed by hereditary veneration? No; we are told he was a low-born usurper, and not even a Frenchman! Is it that he was a good and kind sovereign? He is represented not only as an imperious and merciless despot, but as most wantonly careless of the lives of his soldiers. Could the French army and people have failed to hear from the wretched survivors of his supposed Russian expedition, how they had left the corpses of above 100,000 of their comrades bleaching on the snow-drifts of that dismal country, whither his mad ambition had conducted him, and where his selfish cowardice had deserted them? Wherever we turn to seek for circumstances that may help to account for the events of this incredible story, we only meet with such as aggravate its improbability.* Had it been told of some distant country, at a remote period, we could not have told what

* “ Events may be so extraordinary that they can hardly
 “ be established by testimony. We would not give credit to
 “ a man who would affirm that he saw a hundred dice thrown

peculiar circumstances there might have been to render probable what seems to us most strange; and yet in *that* case every philosophical sceptic, every free-thinking speculator, would instantly have rejected such a history, as utterly unworthy of credit. What, for instance, would the great Hume, or any of the philosophers of his school, have said, if they had found in the antique records of any nation such a passage as this? “There
“ was a certain man of Corsica, whose name was
“ Napoleon, and he was one of the chief captains
“ of the host of the French; and he gathered
“ together an army, and went and fought against
“ Egypt: but when the king of Britain heard
“ thereof, he sent ships of war and valiant men to
“ fight against the French in Egypt. So they
“ warred against them, and prevailed, and strength-
“ ened the hands of the rulers of the land against
“ the French, and drave away Napoleon from
“ before the city of Acre. Then Napoleon left the
“ captains and the army that were in Egypt, and
“ fled, and returned back to France. So the
“ French people took Napoleon, and made him
“ ruler over them, and he became exceeding great,

“ in the air, and that they all fell on the same faces.”—*Edin. Review*, Sept. 1814, p. 327.

Let it be observed, that the instance here given is *miraculous* in no other sense but that of being highly *improbable*.

“insomuch that there was none like him of all
“that had ruled over France before.”

What, I say, would Hume have thought of this, especially if he had been told that it was at this day generally credited? Would he not have confessed that he had been mistaken in supposing there was a peculiarly blind credulity and prejudice in favour of everything that is accounted *sacred*;* for that, since even professed sceptics swallow implicitly such a story as this, it appears there must be a still blinder prejudice in favour of everything that is *not* accounted sacred?

Suppose, again, we found in this history such passages as the following: “And it came to pass
“after these things that Napoleon strengthened
“himself, and gathered together another host
“instead of that which he had lost, and went
“and warred against the Prussians, and the
“Russians, and the Austrians, and all the rulers
“of the north country, which were confederate
“against him. And the ruler of Sweden, also,
“which was a Frenchman, warred against Na-
“poleon. So they went forth, and fought against

* “If the spirit of religion join itself to the love of wonder,
“there is an end of common sense; and human testimony in
“these circumstances loses all pretensions to authority.”—
Hume's Essay on Miracles, p. 179, 12mo; p. 185, 8vo, 1767;
p. 117, 8vo, 1817.

“ the French in the plain of Leipsic. And the
“ French were discomfited before their enemies,
“ and fled and came to the rivers which are behind
“ Leipsic, and essayed to pass over, that they
“ might escape out of the hand of their enemies;
“ but they could not, for Napoleon had broken
“ down the bridges; so the people of the north
“ countries came upon them, and smote them with
“ a very grievous slaughter.”

“ Then the ruler of Austria and all the rulers
“ of the north countries sent messengers unto
“ Napoleon to speak peaceably unto him, saying,
“ Why should there be war between us any more?
“ Now Napoleon had put away his wife, and taken
“ the daughter of the ruler of Austria to wife.
“ So all the counsellors of Napoleon came and
“ stood before him, and said, Behold now these
“ kings are merciful kings; do even as they say
“ unto thee; knowest thou not yet that France is
“ destroyed? But he spake roughly unto his
“ counsellors, and drave them out from his pre-
“ sence, neither would he hearken unto their voice.
“ And when all the kings saw that, they warred
“ against France, and smote it with the edge of
“ the sword, and came near to Paris, which is the
“ royal city, to take it: so the men of Paris went
“ out, and delivered up the city to them. Then

“ those kings spake kindly unto the men of Paris,
 “ saying, Be of good cheer, there shall no harm
 “ happen unto you. Then were the men of Paris
 “ glad, and said, Napoleon is a tyrant; he shall
 “ no more rule over us: also all the princes, the
 “ judges, the counsellors, and the captains whom
 “ Napoleon had raised up even from the lowest of
 “ the people, sent unto Lewis the brother of King
 “ Lewis, whom they had slain, and made him king
 “ over France.”

“ And when Napoleon saw that the kingdom
 “ was departed from him, he said unto the rulers
 “ which came against him, Let me, I pray you,
 “ give the kingdom unto my son: but they would
 “ not hearken unto him. Then he spake yet
 “ again, saying, Let me, I pray you, go and live
 “ in the island of Elba, which is over against
 “ Italy, nigh unto the coast of France; and ye
 “ shall give me an allowance for me and my house-
 “ hold, and the land of Elba also for a possession.
 “ So they made him ruler of Elba.”

“ In those days the Pope returned unto his own
 “ land. Now the French, and divers other nations
 “ of Europe, are servants of the Pope, and hold
 “ him in reverence; but he is an abomination unto

“ the Britons, and to the Prussians, and to the
 “ Russians, and to the Swedes. Howbeit the
 “ French had taken away all his lands, and robbed
 “ him of all that he had, and carried him away
 “ captive into France. But when the Britons,
 “ and the Prussians, and the Russians, and the
 “ Swedes, and the rest of the nations that were
 “ confederate against France, came thither, they
 “ caused the French to set the Pope at liberty,
 “ and to restore all his goods that they had taken;
 “ likewise they gave him back all his possessions;
 “ and he went home in peace, and ruled over his
 “ own city as in times past.”

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 “ And it came to pass when Napoleon had
 “ not yet been a full year at Elba, that he said
 “ unto his men of war which clave unto him, Go
 “ to, let us go back to France, and fight against
 “ King Lewis, and thrust him out from being king.
 “ So he departed, he and six hundred men with
 “ him that drew the sword, and warred against
 “ King Lewis. Then all the men of Belial gathered
 “ themselves together, and said, God save Napoleon.
 “ And when Lewis saw that, he fled, and gat him
 “ into the land of Batavia: and Napoleon ruled
 “ over France,” &c. &c. &c.

Now if a free-thinking philosopher—one of those

who advocate the cause of unbiassed reason, and despise pretended revelations—were to meet with such a tissue of absurdities as this in an old Jewish record, would he not reject it at once as too palpable an imposture* to deserve even any inquiry into its evidence? Is that credible then of the civilized Europeans now, which could not, if reported of the semi-barbarous Jews 3000 years ago, be established by any testimony? Will it be answered, that “there is nothing *supernatural* in all this?” Why is it, then, that you object to what is *supernatural*—that you reject every account of *miracles*—if not because they are *improbable*? Surely then a story equally or still more improbable, is not to be implicitly received, merely on the ground that it is *not* miraculous: though in fact, as I have already (in note, p. 34,) shown from Hume’s authority, it really *is* miraculous. The opposition to Experience has been proved to be

* “I desire any one to lay his hand upon his heart, and “after serious consideration declare whether he thinks that “the falsehood of such a book, supported by such testimony, “would be more extraordinary and miraculous than all the “miracles it relates.”—*Hume’s Essay on Miracles*, p. 200, 12mo; p. 206, 8vo, 1767; p. 131, 8vo, 1817.

Let it be borne in mind, that Hume (as I have above remarked) continually employs the terms “miracle” and “prodigy” to signify anything that is highly *improbable* and *extraordinary*.

as complete in this case, as in what are commonly called miracles; and the reasons assigned for that contrariety by the defenders of *them*, cannot be pleaded in the present instance. If then philosophers, who reject every wonderful story that is maintained by priests, are yet found ready to believe *everything else*, however improbable, they will surely lay themselves open to the accusation brought against them of being unduly prejudiced against whatever relates to religion.

There is one more circumstance which I cannot forbear mentioning, because it so much adds to the air of fiction which pervades every part of this marvellous tale; and that is, the *nationality* of it.*

Buonaparte prevailed over all the hostile States in turn, *except England*; in the zenith of his power, his fleets were swept from the sea, *by England*; his troops always defeat an equal, and frequently even a superior number of those of any other nation, *except the English*; and with them it is just the reverse; twice, and twice only, he is personally engaged against an *English commander*,

* “The wise lend a very academic faith to every report which favours the passion of the reporter, whether it magnifies his *country*, his family, or himself.”—*Hume’s Essay on Miracles*, p. 144, 12mo; p. 200, 8vo, 1767; p. 126, 8vo, 1817.

and both times he is totally defeated; at Acre, and at Waterloo; and to crown all, *England* finally crushes this tremendous power, which had so long kept the continent in subjection or in alarm; and to the *English* he surrenders himself prisoner! Thoroughly national, to be sure! It *may* be all very true; but I would only ask, *if* a story *had* been fabricated for the express purpose of amusing the English nation, could it have been contrived more ingeniously? It would do admirably for an epic poem; and indeed bears a considerable resemblance to the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*; in which Achilles and the Greeks, Æneas and the Trojans, (the ancestors of the Romans,) are so studiously held up to admiration. Buonaparte's exploits seem magnified in order to enhance the glory of his conquerors; just as Hector is allowed to triumph during the absence of Achilles, merely to give additional splendour to his overthrow by the arm of that invincible hero. Would not this circumstance alone render a history rather *suspicious* in the eyes of an acute critic, even if it were not filled with such gross improbabilities; and induce him to suspend his judgment, till very satisfactory evidence (far stronger than can be found in this case) should be produced?

Is it then too much to demand of the wary

academic* a suspension of judgment as to the “life and adventures of Napoleon Buonaparte?” I do not pretend to *decide* positively that there is not, nor ever was, any such person; but merely to propose it as a *doubtful* point, and one the more deserving of careful investigation, from the very circumstance of its having hitherto been admitted without inquiry. Far less would I undertake to decide what is, or has been, the real state of affairs. He who points out the improbability of the current story, is not bound to suggest an hypothesis of his own;† though it may safely be affirmed, that it would be hard to invent any one more improbable than the received one. One may surely be allowed to hesitate in admitting the stories which the ancient poets tell, of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions being caused by imprisoned giants, without being called upon satisfactorily to account for those phænomena.

Amidst the defect of valid evidence under which, as I have already shown, we labour in the present

* “Nothing can be more contrary than such a philosophy” (the academic or sceptical) “to the supine indolence of the mind, its rash arrogance, its lofty pretensions, and its superstitious credulity.”—*Fifth Essay*, p. 68, 12mo; p. 41, 8vo, 1817.

† See *Hume’s Essay on Miracles*, pp. 189, 191, 195, 12mo; pp. 193, 197, 201, 202, 8vo, 1767; pp. 124, 125, 126, 8vo, 1817.

instance, it is hardly possible to offer more than here and there a probable conjecture; or to pronounce how much may be true, and how much fictitious, in the accounts presented to us. For it is to be observed that this case is much *more* open to sceptical doubts even than some miraculous histories; for some of *them* are of such a nature that you cannot consistently admit a part and reject the rest; but are bound, if you are satisfied as to the reality of any one miracle, to embrace the whole system; so that it is necessary for the sceptic to impeach the evidence of *all* of them, separately, and collectively: whereas *here* each single point requires to be *established* separately, since no one of them authenticates the rest. Supposing there be a state-prisoner at St. Helena, (which, by the way, it is acknowledged, many of the French disbelieve,) how do we know who he is, or why he is confined there? There have been state-prisoners before now, who were never guilty of subjugating half Europe, and whose offences have been very imperfectly ascertained. Admitting that there have been bloody wars going on for several years past, which is highly probable, it does not follow that the events of those wars were such as we have been told;—that Buonaparte was the author and conductor of them;—or that such a person ever existed. What disturbances may have taken place

in the government of the French people, we, and even nineteen-twentieths of *them*, have no means of learning but from imperfect hearsay evidence; and how much credit they themselves attach to that evidence, is very doubtful. This at least is certain; that a M. Berryer, a French advocate, has published memoirs, professing to record many of the events of the recent history of France, in which, among other things, he states his conviction that Buonaparte's escape from Elba was DESIGNED AND CONTRIVED BY THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT.* And we are assured by many travellers that this was, and is, commonly reported in France.

Now that the French should believe the whole story about Buonaparte according to this version of it, does seem utterly incredible. Let any one suppose them seriously believing that we maintained for many years a desperate struggle against this formidable emperor of theirs, in the course of which we expended such an enormous amount of blood and treasure as is reported;—that we finally, after encountering enormous risks, succeeded in subduing him, and secured him in a place of safe exile;—and that, in less than a year after, we turned him out again, like a bag-fox,—or rather, a bag-lion,—for the sake of amusing ourselves by again staking all that was dear to us on the event of a doubtful

* See *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1842, p. 162.

and bloody battle, in which defeat must be ruinous, and victory, if obtained at all, must cost us many thousands of our best soldiers. Let any one force himself for a moment to conceive the French seriously believing such a mass of absurdity; and the inference must be that such a people must be prepared to believe anything. They might fancy their own country to abound not only with Napoleons, but with dragons and centaurs, and "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," or anything else that any lunatic ever dreamt of. If we could suppose the French capable of such monstrous credulity as the above supposition would imply, it is plain their testimony must be altogether worthless.

But on the other hand, suppose them to be aware that the British Government have been all along imposing on us, and it is quite natural that they should deride our credulity, and try whether there is anything too extravagant for us to swallow. And indeed, if Buonaparte was in fact altogether a phantom conjured up by the British Ministers, then it is *true* that his escape from Elba really *was*, as well as *the rest of his exploits*, a contrivance of theirs.

But whatever may be believed by the French relative to the recent occurrences, in their own

country, and whatever may be the real character of these occurrences, of this at least we are well assured, that there have been numerous bloody wars with France under the dominion of the *Bourbons*: and we are now told that France is governed by a Bourbon king, of the name of Lewis, who professes to be in the twenty-third year of his reign. Let every one conjecture for himself. I am far from pretending to decide who may have been the governor or governors of the French nation, and the leaders of their armies, for several years past. Certain it is, that when men are indulging their inclination for the marvellous, they always show a strong propensity to accumulate upon *one* individual (real or imaginary) the exploits of many; besides multiplying and exaggerating these exploits a thousandfold. Thus, the expounders of the ancient mythology tell us there were several persons of the name of Hercules, (either originally bearing that appellation, or having it applied to them as an honour,) whose collective feats, after being dressed up in a sufficiently marvellous garb, were attributed to a single hero. Is it not just possible, that during the rage for words of Greek derivation, the title of "Napoleon," (*Ναπολέων*), which signifies "Lion of the forest," may have been conferred by the popular voice on more than one favourite general, distinguished for

irresistible valour? Is it not also possible that “BUONA PARTE” may have been originally a sort of cant term applied to the “good (i.e., the bravest, or most patriotic) part” of the French army, collectively; and have been afterwards mistaken for the proper name of an individual?* I do not profess to support this conjecture; but it is certain that such mistakes may and do occur. Some critics have supposed that the Athenians imagined ANASTASIS (“Resurrection”) to be a new goddess, in whose cause Paul was preaching. Would it have been thought anything incredible if we had been told that the ancient Persians, who had no idea

* It is well known with how much learning and ingenuity the Rationalists of the German school have laboured to throw discredit on the literal interpretation of the narratives, both of the Old and New Testaments; representing them as MYTHS, i. e., fables allegorically describing some physical or moral phenomena—philosophical principles—systems, &c.—under the figure of actions performed by certain ideal personages; these allegories having been, afterwards, through the mistake of the vulgar, believed as history. Thus, the real historical existence of such a person as the supposed founder of the Christian religion, and the acts attributed to him, are denied in the literal sense, and the whole of the evangelical history is explained on the “mythical” theory.

Now it is a remarkable circumstance in reference to the point at present before us, that an eminent authoress of this century has distinctly declared that Napoleon Buonaparte was NOT A MAN, but a SYSTEM.

of any but a monarchical government, had supposed Aristocratia to be a queen of Sparta? But we need not confine ourselves to hypothetical cases; it is positively stated that the Hindoos at this day believe "the honourable East India Company" to be a venerable old lady of high dignity, residing in this country. The Germans, again, of the present day derive their name from a similar mistake: the first tribe of them who invaded Gaul* assumed the honourable title of "*Ger-man*," which signifies "warriors;" (the words, "war" and "guerre," as well as "man," which remains in our language unaltered, are evidently derived from the Teutonic,) and the Gauls applied this as a *name* to the whole *race*.

However, I merely throw out these conjectures without by any means contending that more plausible ones might not be suggested. But whatever supposition we adopt, or whether we adopt any, the objections to the commonly received accounts will remain in their full force, and imperiously demand the attention of the candid sceptic.

* Germaniæ vocabulum recens et nuper additum; quoniam qui primi Rhenum transgressi Gallos expulerint, ac nunc Tungri, tunc Germani vocati sint: ita nationis nomen in nomen gentis evaluisse paullatim, ut omnes, primum a victore ob metum, mox a seipsis invento nomine, Germani vocarentur. — *Tacitus, de Mor. Germ.*

I call upon those, therefore, who profess themselves advocates of free inquiry—who disdain to be carried along with the stream of popular opinion, and who will listen to no testimony that runs counter to experience,—to follow up their own principles fairly and consistently. Let the same mode of argument be adopted in all cases alike; and then it can no longer be attributed to hostile prejudice, but to enlarged and philosophical views. If they have already rejected some histories, on the ground of their being strange and marvellous,—of their relating facts, unprecedented, and at variance with the established course of nature,—let them not give credit to another history which lies open to the very same objections,—the extraordinary and romantic tale we have been just considering. If they have discredited the testimony of witnesses, who are *said* at least to have been disinterested, and to have braved persecutions and death in support of their assertions,—can these philosophers consistently listen to and believe the testimony of those who avowedly *get money* by the tales they publish, and who do not even pretend that they incur any serious risk in case of being detected in a falsehood? If, in other cases, they have refused to listen to an account which has passed through many intermediate hands before it reaches them, and which is defended by those who have an

interest in maintaining it; let them consider through how many, and what very suspicious hands, *this* story has arrived to them, without the possibility, as I have shown, of tracing it back to any decidedly authentic source, after all;—to any better authority, according to their own showing, than that of an *unnamed* and unknown foreign correspondent;—and likewise how strong an interest, in every way, those who have hitherto imposed on them, have, in keeping up the imposture. Let them, in short, show themselves as ready to detect the cheats, and despise the fables, of politicians, as of priests.

But if they are still wedded to the popular belief in this point, let them be consistent enough to admit the same evidence in *other* cases, which they yield to in *this*. If, after all that has been said, they cannot bring themselves to doubt of the existence of Napoleon Buonaparte, they must at least acknowledge that they do not apply to that question the same plan of reasoning which they have made use of in others; and they are consequently bound in reason and in honesty to renounce it altogether.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IT may seem arrogant for an obscure and nameless individual to claim the glory of having put to death the most formidable of all recorded heroes. But a shadowy champion may be overthrown by a shadowy antagonist. Many a terrific spectre has been laid by the beams of a halfpenny candle. And if I have succeeded in making out, in the foregoing pages, a probable case of suspicion, it must, I think, be admitted, that there is some ground for my present boast, of having *killed* Napoleon Buonaparte.

Let but the circumstances of the case be considered. This mighty Emperor, who had been so long the bugbear of the civilized world, after having obtained successes and undergone reverses, such as never befel any (other at least) *real* potentate, was at length sentenced to confinement in the remote island of St. Helena: a measure which many persons wondered at, and many objected to, on various grounds; not unreasonably, supposing the illustrious exile to be a real person: but on the

supposition of his being only a man of straw, the situation was exceedingly favourable for keeping him out of the way of impertinent curiosity, when not wanted, and for making him the foundation of any new plots that there might be occasion to conjure up.

About this juncture it was that the public attention was first invited by these pages, to the question as to the real existence of Napoleon Buonaparte. They excited, it may be fairly supposed, along with much surprise and much censure, some degree of doubt, and probably, of consequent inquiry. No fresh evidence, as far as I can learn, of the truth of the disputed points, was brought forward to dispel these doubts. We heard, however, of the most jealous precautions being used to prevent any intercourse between the formidable prisoner, and any stranger, who, from motives of curiosity, might wish to visit him. The "man in the iron mask" could hardly have been more rigorously secluded: and we also heard various contradictory reports of conversations between him and the few who were allowed access to him; the falsehood and inconsistency of most of these reports being proved in contemporary publications.

At length, just about the time when the public scepticism respecting this extraordinary personage might be supposed to have risen to an alarming

height, it was announced to us that he was dead! A stop was thus put, most opportunely, to all troublesome inquiries. I do not undertake to deny that such a person did live and die. That he was, and that he did, *everything* that is reported, we cannot believe, unless we consent to admit contradictory statements; but many of the events recorded, however marvellous, are certainly not, when taken separately, physically impossible. But I would only entreat the candid reader to reflect what might naturally be expected, on the supposition of the surmises contained in the present work being well-founded. Supposing the whole of the tale I have been considering to have been a fabrication, what would be the natural result of such an attempt to excite inquiry into its truth? Evidently, the shortest and most effectual mode of eluding detection, would be to *kill* the phantom, and so get rid of him at once. A ready and decisive answer would thus be provided to any one in whom the foregoing arguments might have excited suspicions: "Sir, there can be no doubt that such a person existed, and performed what is related of him; and if you will just take a voyage to St. Helena, you may see with your own eyes,—not him indeed, for he is no longer living,—but his *tomb*: and what evidence would you have that is more decisive?"

So much for his *Death*: as for his *Life*,—it is just published by an eminent writer: besides which, the shops will supply us with abundance of busts and prints of this great man; all striking likenesses—of one another. The most incredulous must be satisfied with this! “Stat magni NOMINIS umbra!”

KONX OMPAX.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE SEVENTH EDITION.

SINCE the publication of the Sixth Edition of this work, the French nation, and the world at large, have obtained an additional evidence, to which I hope they will attach as much weight as it deserves, of the reality of the wonderful history I have been treating of. The Great Nation, among the many indications lately given of an heroic zeal like what Homer attributes to his Argive warriors, *τίσασθαι Ἑλᾶνῃς ὁρμήματά τε στοναχάς τε*, have formed and executed the design of bringing home for honourable interment the remains of their illustrious Chief.

How many persons have actually inspected these relics, I have not ascertained; but that a real coffin, containing real bones, was brought from St. Helena to France, I see no reason to disbelieve.

Whether future visitors to St. Helena will be shown merely the identical *place* in which Buonaparte was (*said* to have been) interred, or whether another set of real bones will be exhibited in that island, we have yet to learn.

This latter supposition is not very improbable. It was something of a credit to the island, an attraction to strangers, and a source of profit to some of the inhabitants, to possess so remarkable a relic; and this glory and advantage they must naturally wish to retain. If so, there seems no reason why they should not have a Buonaparte of their own; for there is, I believe, no doubt that there are, or were, several Museums in England, which, among other curiosities, boasted, each, of a genuine skull of Oliver Cromwell.

Perhaps, therefore, we shall hear of several well-authenticated skulls of Buonaparte also, in the collections of different virtuosos, all of whom (especially those in whose own crania the "organ of wonder" is the most largely developed) will doubtless derive equal satisfaction from the relics they respectively possess.

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE NINTH EDITION.

THE Public has been of late much interested, and not a little bewildered, by the accounts of many strange events, said to have recently taken place in France and other parts of the Continent. Are these accounts of such a character as to allay, or to strengthen and increase, such doubts as have been suggested in the foregoing pages?

We are told that there is now a Napoleon Buonaparte at the head of the government of France. It is not, indeed, asserted that he is the very original Napoleon Buonaparte himself. The death of that personage, and the transportation of his genuine bones to France, had been too widely proclaimed to allow of his reappearance in his own proper person. But "*uno avulso, non deficit alter.*" Like the Thibetian worshippers of the Delai Lama, (who never dies; only, his soul transmigrates into a fresh body,) the French are so resolved, we are told, to be under a Buonaparte—whether that be (see note to p. 51) a man, or "a system"—that they have found, it seems, a kind of new incarnation

of this their grand Lama, in a person said to be the nephew of the original one.

And when, on hearing that this personage now fills the high office of President of the French Republic, we inquire (very naturally) *how he came there*, we are informed that, several years ago, he invaded France in an English vessel, (the *English*—as was observed in p. 48—having always been suspected of keeping Buonaparte ready, like the winds in a Lapland witch's bag, to be let out on occasion,) at the head of a force, not, of six hundred men, like his supposed uncle in his expedition from Elba, but of fifty-five,(!) with which he landed at Boulogne, proclaimed himself emperor, and was joined by no less than *one* man! He was accordingly, we are told, arrested, brought to trial, and sentenced to imprisonment; but having, some years after, escaped from prison, and taken refuge in England, (*England* again!) he thence returned to France: AND SO the French nation placed him at the head of the government!

All this will doubtless be received as a very probable tale by those who have given full credit to all the stories I have alluded to in the foregoing pages.

THE END.

